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THE

WORKS

OF

SYMON PATRICK, D.D.

SOMETIME BISHOP OF ELY.

INCLUDING HIS AUTOBIOGRAPHY.

EDITED BY

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MICHEL FELLOW OF QUEEN'S COLLEGE, OXFORD.

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JESUS

AND

THE RESURRECTION

JUSTIFIED BY

WITNESSES IN HEAVEN AND IN EARTH.

IN TWO PARTS:

THE FIRST SHOWING THAT JESUS IS THE SON OF GOD:

THE SECOND, THAT IN HIM WE HAVE ETERNAL LIFE.

PART II.

Ὅταν ὁ Θεός τι ποιῇ, λογισμῶν οὔκ ἐστι χρεία.—St. Chrysost. in Johan. Hom. lxvi. [tom. viii. p. 397 D.]

[This title was prefixed by the author to the second edition of the work, published in 1703.]

THE

WITNESSES TO CHRISTIANITY;

OR, THE

CERTAINTY OF

OUR FAITH AND HOPE:

IN A DISCOURSE UPON 1 JOHN V. 7, 8.

PART II.

[The original title to the first edition.]

TO

THE MOST REVEREND FATHER IN GOD

GILBERT

[SHELDON,]

BY DIVINE PROVIDENCE

LORD ARCHBISHOP OF CANTERBURY,

PRIMATE OF ALL ENGLAND, AND METROPOLITAN; AND ONE OF HIS MAJESTY'S MOST HONOURABLE PRIVY COUNCIL, &c.

MAY IT PLEASE YOUR GRACE

To cast your eye upon the second part of that work, the first part of which I took the confidence to address unto your Grace the last year. It is concerning that *ETERNAL LIFE which was with the Father*, as St. John speaks; and now is manifested to us by his Son Jesus Christ, who hath published the most gracious purposes of God the Father towards us. The thoughts of which, as they cannot but be at all times exceeding welcome to devout Christians, (especially to those who are faithful ministers in Christ's kingdom), so never more than when they see their departure is at hand. In which regards I doubt not this treatise will be acceptable to your Grace, because it contains a description and full assurance of that happy life which you shortly expect. For there is nothing so reviving in our declining age, as to think that the passage out of this life leads us not to death, but to immortality: and that it will not take away our happiness from us, but give us a purer enjoyment of it: "Pleasure not mixed with a mortal body, but sincere and free from grief and sorrow. For when we shall be set at liberty and delivered from this prison, we shall come thither where is no labour, no sighing nor old age; but a life of perfect ease and tranquillity, that breeds no trouble, nor any other evil; but is serene and clear in an immovable rest and peace. Where the happy inhabitants sweetly contemplate the

nature of things; and philosophise, not for popularity and the theatre, but for the finding out solid and everlasting truth."

I have but translated the words of Plato [a] (or of some other philosopher that hath borrowed his name), who was much pleased in such thoughts as these: though he made but uncertain guesses at that blessed state which our Lord hath so clearly revealed, and so strongly demonstrated, that we have reason, with never ceasing joy, both in life and death to give him thanks for so great a grace. For as there is nothing beyond this that the heart of man can wish, so nothing of such importance to our present happiness in this world. For which cause the Jews have thought fit to expunge those from the number of Israelites, who do not believe the immortality of the soul and the resurrection of the dead: and to resolve, that they shall have no part in the world to come, though they otherwise live orderly, and observe the precepts of the law. For such men, they saw, opened a door to all licentiousness; and could never do so much good by any other means as they did hurt by subverting this belief.

Which I have endeavoured therefore to establish by such arguments, as they were ignorant of till our blessed Lord and Saviour appeared: who, as St. Matthew observes out of the Psalmist, *uttered things which had been kept secret from the foundation of the world.* Maimonides himself saith, in his last chapter of his book concerning Kings, that, at the coming of Christ, "things hidden and profound shall be laid open and revealed to all [b]:" which is true of nothing more, I have shown, than of that which is the greatest desire of all mankind, immortal life. Of which, though I have not treated according to the dignity of the subject, yet I am confident I have laid a good foundation, to be improved by the labours of those who have more skill and more leisure. And it is a very great satisfaction to have done any thing (though never so small) for the honour of our ever-blessed Lord and Master; whom it is the highest glory in the world to serve in faithfulness and truth: for he will not fail to reward such services with an ample recompense; being a Prince so great, that nothing is beyond his power; and so gracious, that his servants have reason to expect the best effects of his good will. Which may very well content us, whatsoever usage we meet withal at present: and should mightily excite us, as St. Chrysostom often and earnestly exhorts [c], "neglecting the suspicions, and the re-

[a] In Axiocho. [p. 370 D.]

[b] [Quoted by J. Cocceius, excerpt. e Gemara, Sanhedrin,—Opp. tom. ix. p. 247.]

[c] Homil. 87. in Matth. p 539. [ed. Ben. tom. vii. p. 823 D.]

proaches, and the praises too of men, to study this one thing alone, how to be conscious to ourselves of no evil: which will bring us in the end, both here and hereafter, the greater glory."

The God of all grace bless this work to the settling and increasing this holy faith and resolution in all our hearts, whereby we shall also obtain the sweetest foretastes of the joys of the future state. And may your Grace be blessed with many of them, to support the infirmities of old age; and, having finished your days, have an easy passage to that better life; and there receive from the Chief Pastor, when he shall appear, *the crown of glory which fadeth not away:* which is the hearty prayer of,

My Lord,

Your Grace's,

in all dutiful observance,

SY. PATRICK.

TO THE READER.

I HAVE no other reason to give for adding one more to that heap of books, which men complain is already grown too great, but the hope I have of doing some service to our Lord, by making a further search (as I promised in the conclusion of the former part of this work) into the testimony of these divine witnesses concerning ETERNAL LIFE.

The hope of which is the most precious legacy the Son of God hath left us; the hinge upon which all religion turns: without which it would be the greatest vanity (as Lactantius[a] often speaks) to obey the commands of virtue; for whose sake we must endure not only many labours, but ofttimes sore calamities. "We were born (as he discourses elsewhere[b]) to acknowledge God the Maker of us and the world: whom we therefore acknowledge, that we may worship him; and therefore worship him, that we may receive immortality for a reward of our labours, (because his service engages us in the greatest:) and therefore immortality is bestowed on us for a recompense, that, being made like to the angels, we may serve the Father and Lord of all for ever, and be the eternal kingdom of God. This is the chief of all things, this is the secret of God, this is the mystery of the world; to which they are strangers, who, following their present pleasures, have addicted themselves to terrestrial and frail goods, and sunk their souls, born to celestial enjoyments, into delights as deadly as they are muddy and dirty."

And it is the singular privilege of Christians, as I have demonstrated, to be assured of a good so great, by so many most credible witnesses; whose testimony none can refuse, but they that will be so absurd as to believe none at all. The FATHER, the WORD, the HOLY GHOST, the WATER, the BLOOD, and the SPIRIT, declare so unanimously and so plainly, that the Lord Jesus will give eternal life to his followers, that what the orators said in flattery to the Athenians in the time of the Chremonidian war, may in truth be

[a] Lib. vi. c. 9. [tom. i. p. 455.] vii. 1. [p. 514.] [b] Lib. vii. 6. [p. 534.]

said to us, if we alter but one word: that "other things indeed are common to us with the rest of the world; *τὴν δ' ἐπὶ τὸν οὐρανὸν ἀνθρώπους φέρουσαν ὁδὸν Χριστιανοὺς εἰδέναι μόνους*[c], but the way that leads men to heaven is known to Christians alone:" who have a manifold grace bestowed on them; enjoying not only a promise of eternal life, (which the world never had before,) but that promise attested by so many witnesses: who tell us also, it is in the power of him that died for us to confer it on us, as well as to show us by what means we may become so exceeding blessed.

The serious reader, I doubt not, will be sensible of this, when he hath perused the following work; in which I have endeavoured to satisfy those also who wish I had said something of that part of this record which I undertook to explain; *These three are one.* Which words, I have reason to believe, (whatsoever the Socinians have pretended to the contrary,) were always a part of this holy Scripture. For they are alleged by St. Cyprian, in his book of the Unity of the Catholic Church[d], to show how dangerous it is to break that unity by the clashing of our wills, which not only coheres by celestial sacraments, but proceeds, as he speaks, from the divine firmness. "For our Lord saith, *I and the Father are one.* And again, it is written of the Father, and the Son, and the Holy Ghost, *Et hi tres unum sunt, and these three are one.*" By which, that the apostle would have us to understand not merely the consent of their testimony, (though that is not to be excluded,) but the unity of their nature or essence, we have great reason to think, because there can no account be given why he should not use the same form of speech here which follows, when he speaks of the other three witnesses, if these three in heaven were no otherwise three than those three in earth. Which being admitted, (and if we take in the constant sense of the church to interpret the words, we cannot make any further doubt of it,) that *these three are one* in their essence, then it is certain there are Three Persons whose essence is one and the same. For else there would not be *three witnesses in heaven,* but only *one:* which would cross the design of the apostle, whose scope is to show that our faith doth not rely upon a single testimony. And indeed the holy Scriptures in other places ascribe such actions and works to each of them as are proper to persons: which is a sufficient warrant to the church to express the distinction that is between them by this name. *Non quia scriptura dicit,* (as St. Augustine[e] speaks

[c] Athenæus in Deipnosoph. lib. vi. [p. 250 f.]

[d] [De Unit. Eccles. p. 109.]

[e] Lib. vii. de Trinitate, cap. 4. [tom. viii. col. 859 F.]

concerning this very business,) *sed quia Scriptura non contradicit*; 'not because the Scripture saith they are persons, but because the Scripture doth not say the contrary:' but rather, I may add, directs us to say they are, for the reason before mentioned. "When human scantiness (as that holy doctor of the church goes on) endeavoured to express in words that which it conceived in the secret of the mind concerning our Lord God the Creator, it was afraid to say there were three essences, lest any diversity should be thought to be in that highest equality: and on the other side, to say there were not *tria quædam*, 'really three,' was to fall into the heresy of Sabellius. For it is certain there is the Father, and the Son, and the Holy Ghost; and that the Son is not the Father, nor the Holy Ghost the Father or the Son. It sought therefore what three it should call them; and it said *three persons*, (as the Latin church speaks,) by which name it would not have any diversity understood, but only singularity: that not only *unity* should be there conceived, because we say there is one essence, but a *trinity* also, because we say there are three persons."

This faith we ought to defend; and in this simple belief we ought, I have shown, to acquiesce. We ought to defend it because it is the catholic faith, revealed in the holy Scriptures; according as they have been always understood by the church of Christ. "For it is sufficient (as St. Gregory Nyssen[r] excellently discourses against those that demanded more proof of these things) to the demonstration of this doctrine, that we have a tradition descended to us, like an inheritance, by succession from the apostles, and transmitted through the hands of holy men that followed them. They that will innovate need the help of mighty arguments, if they will go about to shake the faith, not of men built on the sand, and wavering like Euripus, but grave, settled, and constant in their opinion. And while we see nothing but mere discourse against it, τίς οὕτως ἠλίθιος καὶ κτηνώδης, 'who is there so silly and brutish' as to think the doctrine of the evangelists and apostles, and of those lights that succeeded them in the church, to be weaker than their babble, without demonstration?"

But we shall not wholly avoid the imputation of folly, unless we also rest satisfied in this plain belief; not busying ourselves in more curious inquiries. For the greatest lights in the church, I have shown, will lead us no farther; but tell us we shall grope in darkness, if we will needs pry too much into this mystery. Which we ought to discourse of as becomes divines, not philosophers: lest,

[r] Lib. iii. contra Eunomium, p. 126. [tom. ii. p. 554 D. ed. Morell.]

as Henricus à Gandava censures Albertus Magnus, (in his book of Ecclesiastical Writers [g]), "whilst we follow too much the subtlety of secular philosophy, we cloud the splendour of theological purity." We must remember that we are men, and that our understandings are but shallow: which ought not therefore to venture boldly into such depths as that of the divine essence. There is nothing so much becomes us, when we think of God, as an holy fear and reverence, producing in us low thoughts of ourselves: without which we are not like to be illuminated from above; nor can we, should we know never so much, be acceptable to God. *Quid enim prodest alta de Trinitate disputare, si careas humilitate, unde displiceas Trinitati?* (as Thomas à Kempis honestly speaks:) 'For what will it profit thee to dispute loftily of the Trinity, if, through want of humility, thou displeasest the Trinity?'

The way to ETERNAL LIFE, it is certain, lies in that road; which we shall be in danger to miss, if we give ourselves too great a liberty of disputing about things so much above our reach. We ought to be aware of this artifice of the grand deceiver: who is wont to draw us secretly from attending to our known duty, while we are amusing ourselves with sublime speculations. Which the holy fathers of the church have carefully observed, and cautioned us against by their severe reproofs. "What means (saith St. Gregory Nazianzen [h]) this ambitious humour of disputing, and itch of the tongue? what new disease and unsatiable appetite is this? While our hands are bound, why do we arm our tongue? Hospitality, brotherly love, conjugal affection, virginity, are no longer praised. Feeding the poor, psalmody, nocturnal stations, tears are not now in request. We do not bring under the body by fastings; nor leave it a while, to go to God by prayer. We do not bring the worse in subjection to the better; the dust, I mean, to the spirit. We do not make our life a meditation of death. Our passions are not mastered. Forgetting our heavenly original, we let anger swell and rage; and take no care to suppress that pride and haughtiness which will at last lay us low. We do not chastise irrational sadness, nor foolish pleasure, nor unchaste laughter, nor disorderly aspects, nor unsatiable hearing, nor immoderate talking, nor absurd thoughts, nor any of those things by which the evil one takes advantage against us to our ruin. There is nothing like to this; but quite contrary, we give liberty to other men's evil affections, and (like princes when they have got the victory), require nothing of them, but only that

[g] [Cap. 43. p. 170. in Biblioth. Eccles. per Miræum, part. i.]

[h] Orat. xxxiii. p. 533. [ed. Ben. orat. xxvii. § 7. tom. i. p. 492 C.]

they be on our side, and take our part: though they oppose God the more impiously and audaciously."

These things, it seems, were then too manifest to be denied; and notwithstanding these reproaches of holy men, the humour propagated itself to after times. For the cure or prevention of which, nothing is so necessary to be believed and preserved perpetually in mind, as that counsel which the same great Doctor gives in another place[i]. Βούλει θεόλογος γίνεσθαι; &c.: 'Wouldst thou be a divine, and worthy of God?' Τὰς ἐντολὰς φύλασσε, 'Keep the commandments: go in the way of God's precepts. Practice is the best step thou canst take to contemplation.' Which is the surest advice for all Christians to follow, who must not think by any other means to arrive at that blissful sight of God; in which our knowledge of him will be perfected in the other world.

Of which Beatifical Vision I have not adventured to say much in the ensuing treatise, because "our manner of living (as St. Augustine speaks in an epistle of his upon this very subject[k]), is of more consideration in this inquiry than our manner of speaking. *Nam qui didicerunt a Domino Jesu mites esse et humiles corde, plus cogitando et orando proficiunt, quam legendo et audiendo:* for they that have learned of the Lord Jesus to be lowly and humble in heart, profit more by meditation and prayer than they can by reading and hearing." But something I have said, as far as I could find any directions in the holy Scriptures: which warrant us to conclude, that participation we have of God now shall be so improved in the other world, that whatsoever we enjoy of him here, we shall in a higher and after a more perfect manner, with the addition of immortality, enjoy when we rise from the dead. We are now *the sons of God* by faith in Christ Jesus; who bids us be confident of it, and rejoice in it. And yet he mentions this as a special privilege belonging to us after the resurrection; when we shall *not marry nor die any more,* but be *equal to the angels, and be* υἱοὶ τοῦ Θεοῦ, *the sons of God, being the children of the resurrection*[l]. Just as it was with our Lord Christ himself, who was in a more special and excellent manner called the Son of God, after his rising from the dead; when God said to him, *Thou art my Son, this day have I begotten thee:* (advanced him, that is, to a more excellent degree of likeness to him in power and dominion, putting all things under his feet:) so it shall be with all those sons whom he brings unto glory. They shall be

[i] Orat. xxix. p. 493. [ed. Ben. orat. xx. § 12. p. 383 C.]

[k] Epist. cxii. ad Paulinam. [ed Ben. epist. cxlvii. tom. ii. col. 473 G.]

[l] Luke xx. 35, 36.

more nearly related to God at the resurrection, and resemble him more exactly; whose image they now bear in wisdom and goodness. But how much he will then impart of himself to us, the apostles themselves were not able to inform us. *We are now the sons of God*, saith St. John[m], *but it doth not yet appear τί ἐσόμεθα, how we shall be the sons of God* in the other world. We now find (I may add by a parity of reason) a great pleasure in holy thoughts; we feel the joys of ardent love; are ravished with the melody of songs of praise, and with the sweet violence of a glance of light from heaven upon us; and we are sure we shall be so happy as to have a great increase of this pleasure when we remove from hence. But it doth not appear how we shall think, nor what will be the satisfaction of heavenly love; nor what new songs shall be put into our mouths; nor how God will look in upon us, when *we shall see him as he is*. We must be content to know, that all these will bear a proportion to the infinite goodness of him who is omnipotent, and hath loved us so much as to purchase us with a great price, and to give his holy Spirit to us; and according to the love of him that died for us, and is gone to prepare a place for us, that where he is, there we may be also.

In this hope we may now *rejoice* (though we do not at present see our Lord) *with joy unspeakable and full of glory*. For I have proved, by undeniable arguments, that God the Father hath given power to his Son Jesus to make us more happy than we can now conceive; and that he will undoubtedly bring us to live with himself. What greater good can we desire than this? or what greater motive can be thought of, to persuade us sincerely to embrace the Christian religion; whose business it is (as Lactantius concludes his book Of a Blessed Life[n]) to direct us to the eternal rewards of the heavenly treasure? "Of which that we may be capable, we must presently disengage ourselves from the ensnaring pleasures of this life, which deceive men's souls by their pernicious sweetness. And how great a felicity ought we to esteem it, to go, being delivered from the impurities of this earth, to that most equal Judge, and most indulgent Father; who, for our labours, will give us rest; for death, life; for darkness, light; for earthly short goods, those that are celestial and eternal! None of the sharpnesses and miseries which we endure here, while we are employed in the works of righteousness, are in any manner to be compared with that reward. Therefore, if we will be wise, if we will be happy, let us propose the worst things that

[m] 1 John iii. 2. [n] [Inst. Div. lib. vii. cap. 27. tom. i. p. 589.]

can be to ourselves, and resolve to suffer them: since it is manifest, that this frail pleasure we have here shall not be without punishment, nor virtue without a divine reward. All mankind ought to endeavour, with all speed, to direct themselves into the right way; that having undertaken and performed the duties of a virtuous life, and patiently endured its labours, they may be worthy to have God for their Comforter. For our Father and Lord, who made and settled the heaven, who brought the sun and the rest of the stars into it, and out of nothing raised the rest of the world to this perfection wherein we see it, beholding the errors of mankind, sent a Leader, who should lay before us the way of righteousness. Him let us all follow; him let us hear; him let us most devoutly obey: 'for he alone hath purged men's hearts by his truth, and set due bounds to their desires and fears; showing them the chiefest good, to which they should tend, and the way whereby it may be attained [m].' Nor hath he only shown it, but he hath gone before us in it, lest any should shun the course of virtue because of the difficulty that attends it. Let the way of perdition and deceit therefore be forsaken; in which death lies concealed under the enticements of pleasure. And the nearer any man, by reason of his years, sees that day approaching in which he must depart this life, let him cast in his mind the more seriously how he may go away as pure as may be; how he may come innocent to his Judge; and not, as those whose minds are blinded, how he may satisfy his lusts more greedily before he go. Let every man deliver himself out of that gulf while he may, while he hath some power; and convert to God with his whole soul, that he may securely expect that day in which God, the Lord and Governor of the world, will judge every man's works and thoughts. Let him not only neglect, but fly from those things of which men are now so greedy. Let him look upon his soul as better than these fallacious goods, whose possession is uncertain and fading. For they go away continually more swiftly than they come; and if we could enjoy them to the last, they must be left to others. We can carry nothing away but a life piously and innocently led. He shall come rich and wealthy to God, whom continence, mercy, patience, charity, and faith shall wait upon. This is our inheritance,

[m] [From Lucretius:—

Veridicis igitur purgavit pectora dictis,
Et finem statuit turpedinis atque timoris;
Exposuitque bonum summum, quo tendimus omnes,
Quid foret; atque viam monstravit tramite parvo,
Qua possemus ad id recto contendere cursu.

De Rer. Nat. vi. 23.]

which can neither be taken from any man nor transferred to an other. And whosoever is desirous of it may have it, if he please. But let no man trust in riches, nor in dignity, nor in kingly power: these do not make us immortal. Let us give our mind to righteousness, which alone will be our inseparable companion, till it bring us to God. As long as we live let us continue our warfare unweariedly; let us keep our watch; let us valiantly encounter with the enemy: that, being conquerors, and triumphing over the vanquished adversary, we may receive from our Lord the reward of virtue which he hath promised."

There is the greatest reason, I have demonstrated, to expect it with such a lively faith as was in the first Christians, (in whose words I have chosen to deliver these things, rather than mine own,) who confidently looked death in the face, in whatsoever shape it appeared, and were not in the least daunted at the sight of it. There were innumerable experiments made of it, not only in men, but in women and children; as the great Athanasius[n] justly glories: who takes this to be "no small token of the abolishing death, (so that it had no power, but was indeed dead itself,) that it was contemned by all the disciples of Christ: before whose divine appearing, φοβερὸς ἦν καὶ αὐτοῖς τοῖς ἁγίοις, 'it was dreadful to the saints themselves,' who bewailed and lamented those that died, as if they were lost. But since our Saviour rose from the dead it is no longer terrible; but all that believe on him tread it under foot, as if it were nothing; and choose rather to die than deny the faith of Christ. For they know certainly that the dead do not perish, but that they both live, and shall also be made incorruptible by the resurrection. That evil one, the devil, who heretofore by death insulted over us, is himself alone now left truly dead: of which this is a sign, that, whereas before men believed on Christ, they looked on death as very formidable; since they embraced his faith and doctrine, they do so much slight it, that they run cheerfully to it, and become witnesses against him of our Saviour's resurrection. Mere children make nothing of it. The weaker sex, (so weak is he that had the power of death now grown,) who were formerly deceived by him, laugh him to scorn, as one that is dead and hath lost his power. Just as a tyrant, when a lawful prince hath vanquished him, and bound him hand and foot, is despised, and made a mocking stock by all that pass by him, who no longer fear his rage and cruelty: even so is death, being overcome by our Saviour, trampled upon by all his

[n] Περὶ ἐνανθρωπήσεως τοῦ Λόγου, &c. p. 80. &c. [ed. Ben. tom. i. p. 70, 71.]

disciples; who, bearing witness to their Master, deride it in those words of the apostle, *O death, where is thy victory? O grave, where is thy sting?* What conquests hast thou to brag of now? Behold, we are all made alive through Jesus Christ our Lord.

"Mankind, it is certain, naturally abhors death, and the dissolution of their body; and therefore it is no small demonstration of our Saviour's victory over it, that he hath so changed the nature of man, as to persuade even children in Christ, and tender girls, to make no account of this life, and with joy to think of death. It may seem to some an incredible thing that death should thus have lost its power: but so it doth, that there should be a cloth made of an Indian stone, which fire cannot burn; or that a mighty tyrant, notwithstanding all his forces, should on a sudden be subdued, and held in chains by no visible power. Let him that doubts of either of these put on that cloth, or go into the dominions of the conqueror; and he shall be satisfied of the weakness of the fire, and of the tyrant. In like manner, if we meet with an unbeliever, who, after so many wonders and so many martyrs of Jesus Christ, makes a doubt whether death be destroyed, and a period put to his kingdom; we cannot blame his admiration at so great a thing, provided he do not harden himself in infidelity, nor impudently oppose those things which are most evident. Let him, for his satisfaction, do as he that would know whether such a tyrant as I now spoke of be vanquished, go into the conqueror's country, submit himself, I mean, to Christian instruction, and receive the faith of Christ; and then he shall soon see the weakness of death, and the victory that is got over it. Πολλοὶ γὰρ ἀπιστοῦντες πρότερον, καὶ χλευάζοντες, &c.: "for many who were once not only unbelievers, but mockers, have afterwards believed; and so contemned death, that they have become martyrs for Christ's sake."

I pray God these treatises may have the like happy effect upon some doubting or unbelieving soul, who shall vouchsafe to examine the evidence I have produced for the Christian faith. Against which I beseech such persons not to shut their eyes, nor harden their hearts in infidelity. If they will condescend so far as to consider what we say, they may, of scoffers, become such zealous assertors of the power and glory of the Lord Jesus, as to be willing and ready (though there will be no occasion, I hope, to try their resolution), to testify their love to him, and hope in him, with the loss of their lives. And as long as they live, they will find it the highest of all pleasures to think that they shall never die. Of which happiness we can by no means be so well secured as by the Christian

religion. All the philosophers of greatest fame (as Eusebius observes [o]) talked like children about the immortality of the soul, in comparison with Christians: "among whom," saith he, "boys and girls, and those barbarians too, and the most despicable people, declare this truth, ἔργοις πρότερον ἢ ῥήμασι, 'not so much by their discourses as by their deeds,' which they perform by the power and cooperation of our Saviour." The discourses of Aristotle about this matter are justly said by St. Gregory Nazianzen [p] to be θνητοὺς περὶ ψυχῆς λόγους· because, as Jacobus Billius hath demonstrated, he thought the souls of men to be mortal. And accordingly Theodoret ranks him, in this regard, with Democritus and Epicurus, who boldly said they were corruptible. So little force was there, as he also observes [q], in the many discourses of the most wise Plato, to prove the soul's immortality, which could not make his greatest scholar in love with his opinion: "Whereas our fishermen, and publicans, and shoemakers, persuaded both Greeks, and Romans, and Egyptians, and all other nations of mankind, to believe it. And you shall see, saith he, not only the doctors of the church, but smiths and weavers, and other artizans, both men and women, that understand these things; and not only such people as live in cities, but poor countrymen, are so well instructed, that one may find a ditcher or a neatherd discoursing of the holy Trinity, of the creation of the world; and that knows more of human nature than either Aristotle or Plato."

For Plato himself was not constant in his opinions about the state of the soul after it departed this body: but sometimes speaks of great torments which the wicked endure in dark prisons; and describes their punishments to be dreadful, by the sentence of impartial judges: and otherwhere he talks as if those souls were at liberty to choose what body they will please to go into; and that it pleases them better to be a bird, or perhaps an ass, than formerly it did to be a man [r]. Which contrariety of opinion is observed, and handsomely represented by Eusebius [s], whose words I shall not transcribe. For we find the philosophers talking so discontentedly concerning the present state of mankind, who are subject, they say, to more calamities, and therefore in a worse condition, than any other creature upon the face of the earth; that it is sufficient to convince us

[o] Lib. i. Præpar. Evang. c. 4. [p. 13 D.]

[p] Orat. xxxiii. p. 535. [ed. Ben. orat. xxvii. tom. i. p. 495 A.]

[q] Lib. v. Therapeutices. [tom. iv. p. 833, 41.]

[r] [See the Phædrus, cap. 29. p. 249; and the legend or fable of Er the Pamphylian, in the Republic, lib. x. p. 614 sqq., for the Platonic conceptions of the state of the soul after death.]

[s] Lib. xiii. Præpar. c. 16. [p. 697.]

how little certainty they had of a future state. The steadfast belief of which being taught, as Theodoret observes, with one mouth, and without any disagreement of doubting, by all the apostles and followers of Christ, made all Christian people not only contented with their portion, though more calamitous in those days than any other men's; but also cheerful under the sorest burdens that oppressed them.

And though the ancient Hebrews were taught by holy men of God to know better than the philosophers, and God in his infinite goodness was pleased, when they were in danger of grievous troubles for religion sake, then to give them still more and more hope of another life; (as Grotius wisely observes, both upon the story of Elijah's calling the soul of the widow's son back again [t], and upon the dead man's rising again when he touched the bones of Elisha [u]; and may be further verified from the story of the Maccabees [w];) yet it must be acknowledged, that there was no particular promise made to them of eternal life, either before the giving of the law, or in that covenant made with them by Moses; nor any clear and express promise in after-times, until the coming of our Lord Christ: who hath made a new covenant with us, which is *established upon better promises* than those in the old, as the holy writer to the Hebrews speaks [v]. For the promises of the covenant made with them by Moses were only that they should possess the land of Canaan, and lead a happy life there, while they observed his precepts: but the promises of the gospel are, that by obedience to our Lord we shall come to live eternally with him in the heavens. So the church of Christ hath always understood it, as any one may be satisfied who can read the answer of Ger. Vossius to Ravenspergerus [x]: where he shows that the ancient doctors, especially St. Augustine, looked upon the Old Testament as containing properly and directly the promises only of earthly and temporal things; which were the figures of those that are celestial and eternal. The words of St. Augustine are very memorable to this purpose, in a little book of his, wherein he answers to five questions put to him by Honoratus [y]; to which he adds another of his own, concerning the grace of the New Testament; in which that grace is revealed which was hid in the Old. "God, willing to show," saith he, "that even earthly and temporal felicity is his gift, and ought not to be expected but from him alone, thought fit long ago to dispense the Old Testament,

[t] 1 Kings xvii. 21.
[u] 2 Kings xiii. 21.
[v] Heb. viii. 6.
[w] [2 Macc. vi. 26]
[x] Cap. xxiii. [Opp. tom. vi. p. 899.]
[y] [Epist. cxx. [al. cxl. ed. Ben. capp. 2, 3. tom. ii. col. 423.]

which belongs to the old man; from whom this life must needs begin. But those felicities of the fathers are proclaimed to be granted by the bounty of God, though belonging to this transitory life. For those earthly gifts were the things that were openly and apparently promised and given. Covertly indeed the New Testament was figuratively foretold in all those things, and was understood by a few, whom the same grace was pleased to honour with the gift of prophecy."

By which gift, bestowed not upon a few persons in one nation, but, as their prophets foretold, *upon all flesh*, these things, which were then locked up in secret, are now laid open to the view of all; and so plainly revealed, that we read of *ETERNAL LIFE* oftener in the New Testament than they did of health, and riches, and victory, and long life in the Old. Blessed be the tender mercy of our God, (should all those that have any faith say), who hath *called us into his marvellous light:* whereby we see such things as eye never saw, and see them so clearly that we cannot reasonably doubt of them. We enjoy the body of that whereof they had but the shadow. We have that in substance which they had but in picture. The promise of that is ours which they had only in the type. We have the proof, the evidence, the demonstration of that which was only represented to them in mystical figures. So far are we illuminated beyond those great souls, who were the glory of their times, that we understand the meaning of their own books, and the signification of all the types and shadows, wherein these heavenly things were wrapped up and hidden, better than they could do themselves. For our Lord is risen from the dead, and hath opened the kingdom of heaven; and, tearing the veil in pieces, hath set before our eyes the holy place not made with hands, eternal in the heavens: into which he is entered as our forerunner, to prepare a place for us; and from thence hath sent a more abundant measure of the Holy Ghost, to enlighten the eyes of our understanding, that we may know what the hope of Christianity is, and how exceeding glorious that celestial inheritance which he intends to divide among us[z].

But it is not sufficient to admire this grace (I have demonstrated), we must carefully improve it, or else it will be worse with us than if we had never known it. For if the word spoken by angels was so punctually verified, that every breach of it was duly punished, (as it is Heb. ii. 2–4;) there is no hope that we should escape the severest effects of God's displeasure, *if we neglect so great salvation* as this, which ἀρχὴν λαβοῦσα λαλεῖσθαι, 'being first published to the

[z] Ephes. i. 17, 18.

world' by our Lord Jesus, was further confirmed by the coming down of the Holy Ghost upon his apostles. We are the disciples of him who *spake as never man spake:* whose *word of salvation* (as his gospel is called) we then *neglect*, when we mind not what he saith; or do not often think of it; or, having thought of it, prefer every trifle before it, and will not be moved by such a wonderful grace to obey his precepts. For, by the opposition wherein this stands to the *transgression* and *disobedience* mentioned before against Moses his law, we are sufficiently informed wherein this neglect principally consists: viz. in the transgressing those bounds our Lord hath set us; and disobeying those commands, to the observance of which he incites us by the promise of immortal life.

It is a fearful thing to think how miserable they will be who prove thus inconsiderate; and in how great danger Christians are to be so by the means of that very deceit which plunged the Jews into so many calamities: because God had manifested more of his love to them than to other nations; had given them an excellent law, spoken to them by his prophets, instructed them how to offer sacrifice, and appointed a place where he would dwell among them. They blessed themselves in the outward enjoyment of these singular privileges; they bragged that they were the seed of Abraham, and that they had the oracles of God, and were a people separated to him from the rest of the world by many holy rites: but they took no care to be obedient to his laws, and less regarded to be endued with the spirit of faithful Abraham, who left all those earthly goods, in which they placed their chief treasure, for God's sake. Just thus men suffer themselves to be deluded at this day: because God hath granted us the preeminence even above the Jews themselves, hath brought us into the kingdom of his dear Son, made us the children of light, and let us see such things as many kings and prophets desired to see, but did not see them. They content themselves with the bare profession of this religion, and think it enough to be called by such an honourable name as that of Christ: on whom they rest and rely, as the Jews did on their sacrifices; never thinking of being indued with his blessed nature and Spirit, and offering their wills entirely to God, as he did. Thus men perish, even in the midst of so great light and means of being saved. And there is no help for them, unless they will grow serious, and consider the design of the Christian faith: which will teach them, after a very few thoughts about it, that our Lord Jesus is *the Author of eternal salvation to those* only *that obey him*[a], and will be so far from protecting others

[a] Heb. v. 9.

from destruction, that he himself will be *revealed from heaven, with his mighty angels, in flaming fire, taking vengeance on them that know not God, and that obey not the gospel of our Lord Jesus Christ*[b].

I end this preface as St. Augustine begins his third chapter of his first book of the Trinity, with the alteration of one word only in the conclusion. "Whosoever reads this book, where he is convinced, let him go along with me: where he sticks, let him inquire with me: where he sees his own error, let him return to me; where mine, let him call me back to him. Thus we shall all walk together in the way of charity; tending to him, of whom it is said, *Seek ye his face alway*. Whosoever therefore when he reads saith, This is not well said, for I do not understand it; let him reprehend my speech, but not my faith. It might, it is likely, have been spoken more plainly: but there is no man ever spoke so, as in all things to please all[c]."

[b] 2 Thess. i. 7, 8.

[c] [Tom. viii. col. 751, 2.]

AN INTRODUCTION

TO

THE FOLLOWING DISCOURSE.

Having made in the former treatise as diligent a search as I could into the records of heaven and earth, and found there the clearest evidences that *Jesus is the Son of God*, (to whom therefore we owe the most humble and cheerful obedience,) I purpose now to make a further inquiry into them, after the royal powers which belong to so great a Prince, who both in his nature and in his office so infinitely excels all other, that his loyal subjects may well expect from him the greatest grace and favour. He was God "appearing as man," (to use the words of Ignatius[a],) and "man working mightily as God;" but yet submitted himself to the meanest condition, and the basest death, for the purging away our sins by his blood: whereby he obtained, as the most ample dominion over all creatures, so the largest power, both to remit sins, and also to reward the services of all those that believe on him. To whom his affection is so great, and extends itself in such boundless love, that his kindness towards them will not be perfected, I shall prove, till he hath bestowed on them ETERNAL LIFE.

A blessing for which all mankind most passionately wish: not only because the weakness of our bodies, the inconstancy of all their enjoyments, the troubles we meet with in the world, and the necessity of dying, make it most desirable, but because it comes recommended to us by its own proper worth and excellence; which is so exceeding great, that it renders the most constant untroubled possession of this world's goods, and a perpetuity in this life (could it be obtained) without any sickness or infirmity, a vile and contemptible purchase in comparison with it. This therefore all considerate minds would gladly be well assured of. There is nothing of such importance to their satisfaction as a certainty of immortal hap-

[a] [Θεοῦ ὡς ἀνθρώπου φαινομένου, καὶ ἀνθρώπου ὡς Θεοῦ ἐνεργοῦντος.] Epist. [interpol.] ad Ephes. [cap. 19. Coteler. Patr. Apost. tom. ii. p. 51.]

piness when they leave this body: which will make our obedience to God's commands as steadfast as our belief is, and withal most sweet and easy, whatsoever opposition we have to discourage us. For the hope of ETERNAL LIFE is able to lift us up above all the temptations wherewith the world can assault us, be they either *the lust of the flesh, the lust of the eye, and the pride of life;* or be they those hatreds, reproaches, persecutions, loss of goods, yea, and death itself, which we may be in danger of for piety's sake.

Now looking a little further into this holy writer, who hath preserved the unquestionable records concerning these matters, I find there is as great a certainty of this *eternal life by Jesus Christ*, as there is of his being the *Son of God:* and that the very same *witnesses* who so fully declare the one give no less strong evidence for the proof of the other. For *this*, says he[b], *is the record (or witness), that God hath given to us eternal life: and this life is in his Son.* Which words, being a continuation of the foregoing discourse, carry this sense in them; There is great reason you should receive the *witness of God*, (viz. of the *Father, Word, and Holy Ghost*, and of the *Water, Blood*, and *Spirit*,) not only because it is *greater than the witness of men*, which you cannot justly reject[c], and because, if you do reject it, you *make God a liar*[d], which who can have the heart to do? but also because the thing which is testified to us by these *witnesses*, when they say that *Jesus is the Son of God*, is of all other the most desirable, viz. that God designs for us no less blessing than ETERNAL LIFE, which the Lord Jesus hath in his hands to keep for us, and to bestow upon us.

The ensuing discourse then will necessarily fall into these two parts: first, to show what this ETERNAL LIFE is; and secondly, to prove the certainty of it from the mouth of all those witnesses. Of the first of which I must treat with the greater brevity, because it is not the design of the apostle in this place to give us an account what the ETERNAL LIFE is which God hath promised, but to show that he hath given us an undoubted right to it, and that it is in the power of that great Lord, whose servants we are by faith in him, to dispose of it.

[b] 1 John v. 11. [c] Ver. 9. [d] Ver. 10.

1 St. John v. 11.

And this is the record, that God hath given to us eternal life, and this life is in his Son.

PART II.

CHAP. I.

Of eternal life in general.

And now I launch out, when I go about to speak of *eternal life*, into a wide sea, of which it is but little that our eye can descry, or our thoughts fathom, and less that I must confine myself unto in this present discourse. There is more contained in these two words, ETERNAL LIFE, than all the world can discover, though we have so good a compass as the book of God, whereby to steer our course, and to guide and assist us in our inquiry. We may venture, as far as ever our thoughts will carry us, into this depth; but we shall still see something beyond all that we can conceive, and be enabled by our search to discern more fully that it hath no bottom, no bounds nor limits: as will appear, if you do but attend to this general description of it out of the holy writings; in whose style it is most certain it signifieth, a full and constant enjoyment of all the happiness that our being is capable to receive. I say 'happiness,' because, as *death* in the sacred language denotes all manner of misery, affliction, and trouble; so by *life* it expresses all kind of felicity, pleasure, and contentment. And I say 'full and constant' happiness, because the word *eternal* must needs add something to the other; and that is completeness, firmness, and solidity. As death, if it be not eternal, leaves some

room for thoughts of happiness; so *life*, if it want that addition, doth not exclude all vexation and sadness. But then, on the contrary, both the one and the other, if this be annexed, are made perfect, without any hope of happiness in that *death*, or any fear of misery in this *life*.

To clear our passage, I judge it necessary to spend a few words in making good this notion of *life* and *death*, by producing some places of Holy Writ where they are so used. And first, for *death*, the very first time we meet with it in God's book, it is used to express all the misery that man drew upon himself by his sin: *In the day thou eatest thereof thou shalt surely die*[a], i. e. fall into a most calamitous estate (as it is explained Gen. iii. 16—19.), till, worn out with labour, sorrow, and pain, he returned to the dust out of which he was taken. Thus, when the locusts came upon the land of Egypt, and destroyed every green thing, Pharaoh intreats Moses to pray to the Lord that he would take away *this death only*[b]: which shows, that all the plagues and disasters which fell upon that land went under this general name of *death*; though now it be restrained to the last and greatest of all punishments. The like you read in the second book of the Kings; where the sons of the prophets, as they were eating of their pottage, cry out, *O man of God, there is death in the pot*[c]; something that is very distasteful to the palate, and perhaps hurtful and poisonous to the body, which made them they could not eat it. In the New Testament also (penned by men of the same country) we find the very same language; St. Paul saying that he was *in deaths often*[d], and that he *died daily*[e], and wishing to be delivered from the *body of this death*[f], i. e. of such misery, that it made him sigh and groan sorely under the burden of it. And, to name no more, the *shadow of death* in these books signifies nothing else but an horrible, dangerous place, or a dismal, forlorn condition, into which any miserable person is fallen.

This being the notion then of the word *death* in the speech of the Hebrews, such must be the signification of the word *life* which is opposite to it; whereby they express all felicity and comfortable enjoyments. Thus, when David says his enemies

[a] Gen. ii. 17. [b] Exod. x. 17. [c] 2 Kings iv. 40. [d] 2 Cor. xi. 23. [e] 1 Cor. xv. 31. [f] Rom. vii. 24.

were *lively* or *living* (as it is in the Hebrew text[g]), he means, they were in a flourishing, prosperous condition, abounding with all worldly goods; while he was abandoned to contempt, poverty, and continual danger. And when he says, their *heart shall live that seek God*[h], his meaning is, they shall enjoy true peace and contentment. So, when the people say, *Let the king live*[i], which we render, *God save the king,* they wish him a prosperous and happy reign. And when David acknowledges God to be the *fountain of life*[k], it is as much as to say, an ever-running spring of all felicity, from whom flows, as the foregoing words are, *a river of pleasures.* Hence they are bid to keep to God's commandments *as their life*[l]. And this is said to be the excellency of knowledge, *that wisdom giveth life to them that have it*[m]; because by observing those wise precepts they were put into a most happy condition, which could not be had by any other means, but would certainly be lost by turning from those holy paths. This is a phrase so known, and the translation of the word to this use (saith Maimonides[n]) is so frequent, that all good and wholesome doctrine is called *chajah,* that is, *life:* "and thence our masters say, The just are called *living* even in their death, and the wicked are called *dead* even while they are alive;" because the one were happy, and the other miserable, in those contrary conditions.

The true reason of which dialect or manner of speech I take to be this; that *life,* being the foundation upon which all felicity is built, the root out of which it grows (it being impossible to enjoy any thing unless we be alive), and it abiding and continuing also when the pleasures and other circumstances of life are often interrupted; it was thought the aptest thing to express that felicity which we partake of in life, yea, the fullest felicity, the fruition of the completest good, when life shall be made eternal. And if this be not sufficient to demonstrate that the holy writers intend by *eternal life* all the good we are or shall be capable to enjoy, you may further observe, that they describe it by all things that are excellent and desirable, having borrowed from the glory of the whole world whatsoever

[g] Ps. xxxviii. 19. [h] lxix. 32. [m] Eccles. vii. 12.
[i] 2 Kings xi. 12. [k] Ps. xxxvi. 9. [n] More Nev. part. 1. c. 42. [p. 60.]
[l] Deut. xxxii. 47.

is lovely and illustrious, to help to represent it to us. Shall I put together the several lines whereby it is described in as handsome an order and composure as I can, and so leave every one to judge of the rare beauty of this life, when it shall have all its fillings up, which in its ruder draught appears so amiable in our eyes?

This *life* then, that it may be understood to be the enjoyment of a fuller good than we can conceive, a good beyond the bold desires of the most enlarged and luxurious appetite, is expressed by the hugest heaps of *treasures* (such as the heavens only are great enough to contain); by the possession of an *immortal inheritance* reserved there for us; and by *pearls* and jewels of a price so invaluable, that he is stupid who sells not all he hath, if they are not to be had at a lower rate, to make a purchase of them. These expressions and the rest that follow are so well known, that I need not stay to set down the particular places of Holy Scripture where they may be found, but proceed to tell you, that this *life* is there also set forth by feeding upon the delight of the most exquisite *pleasures*, and being entertained, without any satiety, and in the most noble *company*, at the most sumptuous *feast;* by exaltation withal to the sublimest pitch of *honour*, such as the power of *kings*, the majesty of *thrones*, and the glory of *crowns*, which holy men call in to their assistance, that they may serve to lift up our minds to conceive the height of this happy life, and make it seem the more royal and magnificent.

To which you may add, that they make use of the names of *rest*, and *refreshment*, and *peace*, and *joy* or *contentment:* for as we read of *entering into life*, so we do of *entering into rest*, and *into the joy of our Lord*, and *dwelling in peace;* because these are the only things on earth which can complete and perfect the happiness of those who enjoy princely dignity and power.

But then, when the earth can afford no more colours for the drawing a picture of this most excellent life, or supreme felicity, those holy men ascend up to heaven, and fetch from thence not only some rays of light, but the very sun itself, and that in the top of its glory, to illustrate by its brightness the incomparable beauty of it: for it is called the *inheritance of the saints in light;* and our blessed Lord is called the *Light*

of the world, who promises the *just* that they shall have the *light of life*, and *shine like the sun in the kingdom of the Father*.

But, alas! it is not in the power of such words as these to express its excellence; and therefore, when all things that fall under our eyes and our taste are spent in the description of it, we read then of melodious *songs and thanksgivings*, and the joyful voice of those who triumph continually: nay, the whole world, as big as it is, is introduced as a small resemblance of this happiness; wherein victorious souls are said to *inherit all things*, and to be made *equal to the angels*, who join in consort with them, and bear their part in those heavenly anthems and hymns wherewith they bless and praise the great Lord of all.

But if all the goodly things that are or ever have been in the whole world should meet together, and, falling down at the feet of one man, should with a joint consent conspire to make him happy, they could never advance him near the height of this celestial bliss, whose incomparable excellence cannot be expressed without the assistance of words called down from the highest heavens, the place of God's habitation. And therefore nothing below the *kingdom of heaven*, *a mansion in our heavenly Father's house*, *a building of God in the heavens*, is made the portion of such happy souls. And as if the heavens, yea, the heaven of heavens, could afford nothing great enough to represent this blessedness, holy men lead us, at last, to God himself, whom they bid us behold in the high and holy place, as in his chamber of presence. And this *life* is called *seeing God*, and *beholding his glory*, and *being with our Lord;* which are names of such transcendent greatness, that we had need enjoy this happiness to understand them.

But thus the men of God, from things sensible, lead us by the hand to those that are spiritual and invisible. And now that they have placed our thoughts in the presence of God, there they leave them to take as full a view as they can of him, and to spread themselves in the largest contemplations of his perfections. For they were not able to go any further than only to tell us, that we shall be *made like to him*, whose perfections shine so gloriously in our eyes. This is the highest pitch to which they carry our meditations. Here they bid us

rest our thoughts; and, now that they have advanced them above the earth and heavens, to consider with ourselves what it is to *see God*, till we resemble him, and be perfectly transformed into his most blessed nature and life. All they can do more for us is only to tell us what God is, the enjoyment of whom is our happiness; and who, we are to understand, will be infinitely far more to our whole man than kingdoms and thrones, than crowns and jewels, than feasts and songs, than the sun itself and all the sweet influences of heaven, with the rest of the things forementioned could be, were they all united in one design to make us happy.

The wisest of the Jews, as blind as that nation is, are sensible of this; how disproportionable all the words which even divinely inspired persons use are to the nobleness of this life. "In which," saith Maimonides[o], "there is no room for meat and drink and such like pleasures; . . . but the just sit with crowns on their heads, and delight themselves in the splendour of the divine Majesty. . . . There are many names whereby this life is called (*Derech Maschal*), after the figurative way of speaking in the holy books: for example, the *mountain of the Lord;* the *place* of his *holiness;* the *courts of the Lord;* the *beauty* or *sweetness of the Lord;* the *tabernacle of God;* the *house of God;* his *holy temple;* the *gate of the Lord.* And after the same way of similitude and figurative speech, wise men call this good prepared for the just by the name of a *banquet* or *feast*, and most commonly *the world to come.* Let not this good seem light to thee, nor do thou imagine the reward of piety to be so little, as to drink the richest wines, to eat the best victuals, to have the most beautiful wives, to be clothed in silk and scarlet, to dwell in ivory palaces, and to have all the furniture of gold and silver and such like things. But understand that there is no good in this world to which that supreme good can be compared, but only by way of figure and similitude. In truth, there is no proportion between the good of the soul in the other world, and the goods of the body, such as meat and drink, in this. But that great good is incomprehensible and incomparable, according to those words of David, *O how great good hast thou laid up for those that fear thee*[p]*!* He could not tell how

[o] Cap. viii. de Pœnitent. [pp. 88, 92.]

[p] Ps. xxxi. 19.

great, but with what desire did he long after the life of that world, when he said, *I believe to see the goodness of the Lord in the land of the living*[q]*?* That is another name whereby they called this place of bliss. For wheresoever their ancient wise men (saith their mystical exposition of the Psalms[r]) meet with this phrase in Scripture, *the land of the living*, they expound it of paradise, because "that is the country where men live for ever."

But there are no words like those of our blessed Lord to represent this surpassing happiness of the pure in heart, who he promises shall *see God*. Let us therefore here fix our minds and stay a while, before we pass on any further to search into the meaning of this phrase, which is the sublimest and most comprehensive of all other whereby this ETERNAL LIFE is described to us.

I.

And the least that can be meant by it is, that we shall be there where he hath his most special residence, and shall dwell in his house in the heavens, where there are so *many mansions*. There the angels are said to stand before God, to *behold the face* of our heavenly Father; and therefore for us to *see God*, or behold him, must in general denote that we shall be more like angels than men; and being admitted into the society of those heavenly ministers, shall take up our habitation in the same place where they wait upon the divine Majesty. Whence it is, that as the angels are called the *sons of God*[s], so are all those who shall be *accounted worthy to obtain that world, and the resurrection of the dead*[t]. We are *now the sons of God*[u], saith St. John; in a state, that is, of great favour with him; and therefore need not care if *the world hate us:* but we have far greater things in hope, and look for a more excellent relation to him, it *not appearing yet what we shall be*. The meaning of which last words in all probability is this, that the manner wherein we shall be the *sons of God* in the other world is not now manifest. There is nobody knows how near we shall be to him, when we shall be *the children of God, being the children of the resurrection*, as

[q] Ps. xxvii. 13.
[r] Manasseh Ben. Isr. Probl. xvii. de Creatione. [p. 72.]
[s] Job i. 6; ii. 1.
[t] Luke xx. 35.
[u] 1 John iii. 1, 2.

our Saviour speaks in the place before mentioned. Only this is certain, as I said just now, that we shall be companions of angels, and such *sons of God* as they are; and withal St. John here tells us, that *when he* (or *it*) *shall appear*, we *shall be like him*; it being natural, that the child should bear some resemblance to its Father.

II.

Now from hence it follows, that to *see God* is to enjoy such favours as he will be pleased to impart unto us in that high and holy place where he dwells; yea, to have some participation with him in his blessedness who is most blessed for evermore. For to *see*, in the language of the Hebrews is to *enjoy*, when it is applied to a thing desirable; or to be in that state when it is applied to that which is hurtful. Thus to *see good*[v] is to possess it and to lead an happy life; and to *see the good of Jerusalem*[x], is to partake of its peace and prosperity; and to *see the goodness of the Lord in the land of the living*[y], is in its first sense to be delivered by God, and to enjoy the sweet fruits of it before he died. Nor is there any other meaning of *seeing life* and *seeing the kingdom of God* but this, that the parties to whom those promises are made shall be put into the possession of such blessings. And, on the other side, to *see the Son of man sitting on the right hand of power, and coming in the clouds*[z], is to feel his heavy wrath, the stroke of his revengeful hand upon their nation, as may be gathered from Rev. i. 7: and to *see death*[a], is no more than to die. This is so plain, that those things that belong to other senses yet are said to be *seen*, which can signify nothing else but that they are perceived or enjoyed. *O generation*, (saith Jeremiah ii. 31,) *see ye the word of the Lord;* that is, hear it, mind and consider it; or, as Maimonides expounds it, "the intention of the prophet is, that they should apprehend the sense of God's word[b]." And that likewise which is said to be *seen* in one place is said to be *tasted* in another, as *to see death*[c] is the same with *tasting of death*[d]. Which is a demonstration, that *to see*, in their language, is frequently used for having a sense perception, or enjoyment of any object.

[v] Ps. xxxiv. 12. [x] cxxviii. 5. [b] More Nev. part. 1. c. 46. [p.65.]
[y] xxvii. 13. [z] Matt. xxvi. 64. [c] John viii. 51.
[a] Ps. lxxxix. 48; Luke ii. 26. [d] Ver. 52.

And therefore we cannot necessarily draw any more out of these words of our Saviour, which promise that we shall *see God*, but that we shall have as real an enjoyment of him, and as sensibly perceive him, as we do now any good in this world; though the manner of it be not certainly known, as not so plainly deducible from these words. Let us conceive with ourselves, as well as we can, what his infinite perfections are, his wisdom, his goodness, his power, his purity, his unchangeableness, his immortality and bliss; and then make account there will be a lively communication between us and all these, which will make us partakers of his happiness. We shall not only enjoy such good things as flow from his greatest favour and love; but in our measure, and according to such capacities as he will give us, be what he himself is. Those glorious perfections of his will impart something of themselves to us; so that we shall be like God, and bear some similitude to him in wisdom, goodness, and bliss. We shall be filled with divine joys and pleasures, by being filled with a great sense of him, and a strong love to him, and a lively resemblance of his blessed nature, immutably and immortally, without any change, and without any end. Thus much, we need not doubt, is included in this phrase of *seeing God*; but confidently believe, that good men shall enjoy all the effects of an holy friendship with infinite goodness, and receive such communications from his boundless love, as shall make us really and substantially happy, like as he himself is.

III.

And I make no question, likewise, but hereby is signified an abundant felicity, which God from his own most blessed nature will impart unto us; a very copious participation of himself, which he will bestow upon us. For when Job says that *in his flesh he should see God*, and that *for himself, his own eyes beholding him, not another's*[o], his meaning seems to be, that before he died he was sure God would deal *exceeding bountifully* with him; not only rescuing him from his present miseries, but making him very happy; so that he should not only leave his posterity, when he was gone, to enjoy the blessings which God had still in store for him, but be made in his own

[o] Job xix. 26, 27.

person partaker of them. Which prediction of his seems to have been fulfilled, when it is said, *The Lord gave Job twice as much as he had before*, and that *he blessed his latter end more than his beginning*[f]: then he saw God, and that with his own eyes, when he was thus liberally blessed by him, and received such a large reward of his patience. In like manner, when our Lord saith that pure upright men (like Job) shall *see God*, his meaning may be, that they shall in the highest degree partake of his bounteous goodness, and receive as much from him above all their thoughts as sight is above all other senses.

And indeed the sense of *seeing* is so much more spacious and wide than the rest, that we may very well think an exceeding great happiness is only able to fill up the whole meaning of this expression of *seeing God:* which may be the better understood, perhaps, if we briefly consider the reasons for which the sense of seeing seems fitter than any other to set forth our participation with God in his supreme felicity. They are such as these: (1) It best agrees with those things whereby God is represented to us in the holy Scriptures; where we read that *God is light* (which is the object of sight only), *and in him is no darkness at all.* As light is a thing of which we are most sensible, and whereby we discern indeed all other visible things, but cannot comprehend what it is; such is God: of whom, if we attend, we cannot but be most apprehensive, and without whom we can enjoy nothing, though we cannot declare the inconceivable purity and excellency of his nature. And (2) sight is the noblest sense about us; the eye being a work of more curious and exquisite contrivance than any other part of our body. And (3) it is the most comprehensive sense, which takes in a vast number of things at once, not only of this lower world, but also of the upper. And it is a sense (4) that can longest enjoy the same object; for its object is not wasted and spent in the enjoyment, nor doth it vanish and die so soon as others are apt to do. And (5) it is the principal sense of discipline and learning, which conveys to us the first notices of things more abundantly than the rest, and especially helps us to the knowledge we obtain by making experimental observations. And (6) it affords us the greatest certainty and evidence

[f] Job xlii. 10, 12.

of the truth of things: insomuch that we are wont to say, "We will believe it when we see it;" and it is become a rule in law, that "one eyewitness is better than an hundred hearsays." And again, (7) it is a very affecting sense, which raises passions sooner and quicker than any other. All the rhetorical praises in the world, which are bestowed to commend a lovely object to us, will not move us so much as one glance of its beauty will. The queen of Sheba, you remember, was led by report to come to the court of Solomon; but when she saw the splendour wherein he lived, then it was that *there was no more spirit in her*[g]. And therefore (lastly) it brings in the greatest revenue of the purest and most long-lived pleasures, by presenting us with such a vast variety of objects, as other senses, who have not so large a sphere and compass to move in, cannot entertain us withal.

From all which you may easily gather, that when our Lord expresses the happiness of pure and holy souls by *seeing God*, he may well be thought to intend thereby the strong sense that God will give them of himself, and the intimate familiarity we may hope to have with the first wisdom, purity, and goodness: and then the height and dignity of that state to which we shall hereby be advanced; together with the vast measure of knowledge and love which he will communicate to us; the exquisite and most delicious pleasures which will spring from thence, and overflow our souls; the delightful passions whereby we shall be transported; and the inconceivable satisfaction which we shall have within ourselves. For if St. Philip said here, *Lord, show us the Father, and it suffices*[h]; what shall we think of that manifestation which he will make of himself to us when we shall be unclothed, and have nothing to interpose to hinder our clear sight of him and full converse with him? We are not able to conceive how mightily it will affect our hearts. We must stay till that happy day of our Lord's appearing, to be satisfied to what degree of honour and bliss he intends to promote us; but sure enough he will come, and not fail our expectation. The certainty of this happiness may well be included in our Saviour's promise of *seeing God;* who will give us a sure possession of him, and undoubted contentment, to the very height, in the enjoyment of him; and that in

[g] [1 Kings x. 5.] [h] [John xiv. 8.]

an endless life, without any disquiet or disturbance, without alteration or change, without weariness or disgust; in a never-ceasing ecstasy of joy and delight, to find ourselves united to him, the almighty Lord and Possessor of heaven and earth, the Fountain of all that is good and amiable in this world, who here entertains us with so many pleasures, that by them we may guess what he is able and willing to do for them who have no greater care than above all things to please him. They shall be fixed in a steadfast sight, that is, enjoyment of him, to their infinite satisfaction.

IV.

And if we mark the words of St. John, who speaks this more fully, and tells us, in the place before named, *we shall see him as he is* (which he makes the reason and cause of our being *like him*), they will embolden us still to seek into a further meaning of this phrase. And since we can enjoy nothing without a knowledge of it preceding, we are to understand, that to *see God as he is* will be to have our minds filled with a knowledge of him so clear, so distinct and strong, that it will even turn us into his own nature, life, and bliss. We shall not behold, that is, know him as we do now, by similitudes, resemblances, and expressions borrowed from other things (which is all our natures are here able to bear), but by a clear notion of him formed in our minds, wherein our hearts will be infinitely pleased, and feel his happiness come flowing into them.

My meaning may be thus explained: As it is an imperfect sight of a man which we have in a picture, though drawn by the most curious hand and strongest fancy; and the man himself, if he stand before a looking-glass, will in a moment draw an image more like him than the skilfullest artist can delineate all his life long, especially if he never saw the person, but only had a description of him in a book or by report; just such is the sight or knowledge that we have of God in this world, either by his word, or by his works, or by the ideas of our own mind; a very imperfect thing, and much like the picture of a person which we never yet had before our eyes. But hereafter, when he will be pleased to appear to give us a more immediate sight of him without these helps, and present himself to our mind as the face to a glass: this will be to know

him indeed, and to *see him as he is.* Now as the sight of a friend, when he presents himself to the eye, doth marvellously refresh and comfort us; and there is a sense of pleasure imparted to us in the very beholding a rare beauty, which we are not like perhaps to see any more; so this seeing God is no barren thing, but instantly infuses the highest satisfaction and delight into pure hearts; who, by knowing his blessed nature, will find it imprinting itself (as it were) upon them, and making every one of them to be the blessed image of it. Look, what God is, that they by the sight of him shall be: he will dwell in them as the image of a thing does in the glass; and they shall be possessed of him, of his life, of his joys, by having a sensible perception of the wisdom, the goodness, the purity, and all the other perfections that shine in himself.

V.

Or, if this be too hard to be understood, let us content ourselves to know, that to *see God as he is*, is to enjoy him *as he is in heaven;* that is, according to that manner and measure wherein he shows and manifests himself in those celestial places. Pious souls shall really perceive all the effects of his bounty, wisdom, and power, which are known and communicated in that other world; which, as it is higher than this, so hath more of God to be seen in it than can be discovered here. All that the holy angels see and enjoy of him, all that good which he lets forth out of himself in that glorious place wherein above all other he is said to be, shall be the portion of those happy souls; who may be said therefore *to see him as he is.* They shall not enjoy him in so low a manner as the highest and the most highly beloved persons have enjoyed him in this world, where there is but little of him, but in the noblest manner that he can be enjoyed, so as the heavenly ministers, yea, our ever-blessed Lord, are made partakers of him. For when our Lord prays that his disciples may *behold* or *see his glory*, which the Father had given him[g], his meaning is (according to what I have said of the word *seeing*), that they might have their share at last with him in his happiness, and be admitted to take a part with him in that supreme dignity to which he was ready

[g] John xvii. 24.

to be advanced. And thus, when St. John invites others into the Christian society, telling them that *their fellowship was with the Father and his Son Jesus Christ*[h], it is as much as to say that they could nowhere be so happy; because it is the singular privilege of Christian people to be admitted unto a partnership with God and our Saviour in their most happy life, and to have hopes and expectation to partake with them in their eternal bliss.

VI.

Which may very well give me occasion to add, that since *grace, mercy, and peace* come to us now *from God the Father, Son and Holy Ghost*, we may hope in this vision of God to have as well a clear knowledge of that ever blessed Trinity, as a full communication from their ineffable love. We shall understand that holy mystery, which now the sense of our weakness forbids us to pry into, and be able, perhaps, to unfold how "the Father, the Son, and the Holy Ghost is one God, without any diversity or separation of nature," (as St. Austin expresses this mystery[i],) which I durst not, in my former treatise, adventure to explain. For St. Basil[k] had taught me to mark this in those words of our Saviour, *My sheep hear my voice*[l], that he says, ἀκούει, οὐ συζητεῖ, "they hear, not question or dispute: they believe he is the Word of God, but do not ask how; nor say, if he was alway, then he was not begotten; or, if he was begotten, then he was not alway. These are not the words of the sheep of Christ; who receive his voice, and inquire no further." And I had learnt also from a great divine[m] of our own nation, (to whose grave judgment I thought there was a greater veneration due than to the little forward censurers of this age,) that the doctrine of the Holy Trinity is an argument "more fit for meditation, in prayers and soliloquies, than for controversy or scholastic discourse." We believe one Divine Nature in three Persons: and that the Divine Nature in the Person of the Father required satisfaction

[h] 1 John i. 3.

[i] Epist. cxii. [ed. Ben. Epist. cxlvii.] ad Paulinam, cap. 19. [tom. ii. col. 492 C.]

[k] Homil. de Martyre Mamante. [tom. ii. p. 188 C.]

[l] John x. 27.

[m] Dr. Jackson's Pref. to Cathol. Church. [Comment. on the Creed, book xii. sect. 1. vol. xii. p. 5.]

for the transgressions of men against his holy laws; and that the same Divine Nature in the Person of the Son undertook to make satisfaction for us in taking our nature on him, whereby he had, by right of consanguinity, the authority and power of redeeming us; and the same Divine Nature in the Person of the Holy Ghost doth approve and seal, as he speaks, this happy and ever-blessed compromise. "But what it is to be a Person, and what manner of distinction is between the Persons in the blessed Trinity, are points," saith he[n], "which I never had a mind to dispute after the manner of the schools, but was always ready to admire what I knew not to express."

For what is it that we can say of God, who can conceive so little of him? It is an ancient saying of Plato, that "to conceive God is difficult; to express him is impossible." But he should rather have said, in the opinion of a greater man, Φράσαι μὲν ἀδύνατον, νοῆσαι δὲ ἀδυνατώτερον[o], "it is impossible to express him, and more impossible to conceive him. For that which we can conceive in our mind we may declare in words; if not indifferently well, yet at least obscurely, provided they that hear us are not dull of understanding: but to comprehend in our mind so great a thing as God, is utterly impossible, not only to the dull and stupid, ἀλλὰ τοῖς λίαν ὑψηλοῖς καὶ φιλοθέοις, 'but to the most sublime souls, and those who are lovers of God.' Alas! all that comes to us from him now is but only a short glance, καὶ οἷον μεγάλου φωτὸς μικρὸν ἀπαύγασμα, 'and as it were a little beam of a great light[p].'" We may call it a "full knowledge of the blessed Trinity," as Origen doth[q], when we can say, "The Father is light, and in his light, which is the Son, we see light, the Holy Ghost." But how far short is this of what we long to know of these Three in One! How much are we in the dark still! and what a satisfaction will it therefore be to see them clearly shining on us, and discovering their blessed nature to us! which hitherto no man hath been able to find out, and whether ever any shall find, let those inquire who have a mind. "In my

[n] Knowledge of Jesus Christ, chap. 25. [Comment. book vii. vol. vii. p. 214.]

[o] Greg. Naz. Orat. 34. [al. Orat. 28. § 4. tom. i. p. 498 C.]

[p] [Ib. § 17. p. 509 A.]

[q] In Rom. vi. p. 633. [tom. iv. p. 562 C.] and see Greg. Nazian. Orat. 36. p. 594. [ed. Ben. Orat. 30. § 20. tom. i. p. 554.]

opinion," saith the forenamed father[r], "then we shall find, when this divine, this Godlike thing, our mind and reason, shall be intimately joined with its heavenly kindred, and the image shall return to its archetype or original pattern, of whose acquaintance it is now so desirous. And this seems to me to be that which is so much discoursed of, to *know as we are known*."

Now we know only *in part*, saith St. Paul, (to whose words he hath respect[s],) we behold rather the *images* of things than the things themselves; and those also but *darkly*, and in a cloud: but then we shall *see face to face*, and behold God so clearly, that we shall know him as he knows us. "He hath a double knowledge," says Elias Cretensis upon those words of Nazianzen[t]; "one whereby he simply knows all things, and another whereby he knows his own image, when it is not quite spoiled, which is accompanied with love and delight." And in this latter sense Gregory here understands it. "For look how much serenity and stillness, void of all perturbation, God beholds in his own image: so much of his knowledge will he bestow upon it; giving to every one a measure of illumination answerable to its purity and holiness. Then we may hope to discover those things which are secrets now, and no more understood by us than a child understands the thoughts of the wisest men." "For if St. Paul himself (as St. Chrysostom discourses upon those words[u]), he who knew so much, compares himself to an infant while he was in this state, what may we think of ourselves?" how childish are our thoughts, and how like children do we speak about divine matters, especially of the transcendent nature of God the Father, Son, and Holy Ghost! But how resplendent then must the conceptions be of our grown estate, since, in this infancy of knowledge, God hath revealed so much of himself to us beyond the thoughts of former times! If these things be so bright which we see now but in a glass, and obscurely too, think what the sight of the face will be. "And the better to understand this difference, and to dart a ray of light," saith he, "though but duskish,

[r] Greg. Naz. ibid. [Orat. 28. § 17. p. 508 D.]

[s] 1 Cor. xiii. 11, 12.

[t] [Tom. ii. p. 945 B. fol. Par. 1630.]

[u] [Hom. xxxiv. tom. x. p. 311 E.]

into thy mind, look upon those things under the law now that grace shines. Before grace came, they appeared great and wonderful; but hear now what St. Paul saith of them after grace, that *even those glorious things had no glory in this respect, by reason of the glory that excelleth*[x]." Such is the difference between the knowledge we now have, and that which we shall have hereafter: even what we see of God here, though, as St. Paul says, so exceeding glorious, hath no light in it in this respect, by reason of that light which transcendeth. And therefore, if our Saviour pronounced his disciples blessed, because their eyes saw and their ears heard such things as the old prophets and just men had longed to see and hear, but could not attain that happiness; how much more blessed shall we find ourselves, when we come to see things as much beyond what is now manifested as this revelation is beyond the ignorance of former ages! We shall both wonder at our childish presumption, in offering to talk of things so much above our reach, and wonder at the grace of the ever-blessed Trinity, which hath conducted us notwithstanding to the sight of their undivided glory.

VII.

But it is time to put an end to this; and therefore I shall say no more of this promise of being so happy as to *see God*, but that there is a sense to be made of it which will admit the body as well as the soul to a share with him in those supreme felicities. For when an exceeding great splendour, beyond any created light, appeared to holy men in ancient times, they called it by the name of God (who was hereby represented to be present with them); and the beholding this is called *seeing God*. As when Moses saw the bush in a flame, and from thence a light broke forth at noon day (as Greg. Nyssen speaks[y]) *ὑπὲρ τὸ ἡλιακὸν φῶς*, 'brighter than that of the sun,' we read that he thought of approaching to behold with his eyes the wonder of that light; but, which was more wonderful, (as the same father goes on,) he had his ears illuminated with its beams, *καὶ ἡ τοῦ φωτὸς ἐκείνου φωνή*, 'and the voice of that light' forbade him to come near the mountain. Whereupon he

[x] 2 Cor. iii. 10. [y] De vita Mosis. [tom. i. p. 172.]

presently apprehended that there was a Divine Presence in the bush; and it is said, *he hid his face*, (out of reverence and a holy dread,) *and was afraid to look upon God*[z]. Thence this mountain is called the *mount of God*[a], from this glorious Presence here; which appeared afterward also to give the law from the same place. After which you find that he, and Aaron with his sons, and the seventy elders of Israel, being invited by God to approach towards the foot of that mount where he spake with Moses, it is said that *they saw the God of Israel*[b]. In both which places, though Maimonides would willingly understand a spiritual sight of God with the mind, (being afraid lest any man should imagine God to be corporeal;) yet he acknowledges it is safe enough to interpret it as the Chaldee doth[c], of a sight of that glory which I treated of in my former book (chap. iv[d].), or of an angel, which, in a luminous body, appeared to them.

But this last is rejected by a rule in the Talmud[e], where this very place last named is explained. It is this: "He that interprets a verse of holy Scripture always according to the literal sound, is a liar: and he that addeth to it is a blasphemer. As for example, when it is said, *They saw the God of Israel;* if anybody interpret it literally, he is a liar, for the God of Israel cannot be seen. And if any one add, that they saw the angel of God, he blasphemously gives the honour of God to angels. The Chaldee only is in the right, who says, 'They saw the glory of the God of Israel.'" And so St. Cyril of Alexandria understood it[f], in the like case, when he observes, the people were brought to mount Sinai, that they might be both 'auditors and spectators of God,' ἤγουν τῆς θείας αὐτοῦ καὶ ἀπορρήτου δόξης, 'or of his divine and secret glory.' Which, having never been seen out of the secret place, made now a most illustrious appearance: and at the bottom of it (called *his feet*) there was a *pavement* (on which the glory stood), very bright, and becoming the Majesty that was upon it. For the text says, it was *like a sapphire-stone, and as clear as the purest and*

[z] Exod. iii. 6.
[a] Ver. 1, and xviii. 5.
[b] xxiv. 10.
[c] More Nevoch. part i. cap. 5. [p. 10.]
[d] [Vol. ii. p. 415.]
[e] Tit. Kiddushin, c. 11.
[f] L. 3. Glaphyr. in Exod. [tom. i. p. 317 B.]

serenest sky: a token, I suppose, of the divine favour towards them; which the clearness of the heavens very well represented, as clouds and darkness were signs of God's displeasure. And accordingly it follows[g], that he *did not lay his hand upon the nobles of Israel;* i. e. did not hurt them: (though the common opinion was, that if men saw such a sight, they should die presently.) No, so far were they from receiving any harm by it, that they did not merely *see God*, but also *eat* and *drink*[g] of the relics of the sacrifices that had been newly offered to him[h]. He entertained them with provision taken from his own table; and they feasted with his *Majesty*, to their great joy and satisfaction.

Such a *glory*, I told you, St. Stephen saw, when his persecutors were going to stone him. And it is reasonable to suppose that, in some part of the heavens, God now manifests himself in a most glorious visible majesty, to the exceeding ineffable joy (not terror and affrightment) of those who shall be admitted to approach to that *light*, which is now *inaccessible*. So that this will be a part of our eternal happiness, to live in those pure clear regions, where unknown glories and most splendid magnificent sights will present themselves to us; where we ourselves shall be clothed with a brightness like that wherein our Lord appeared to St. Stephen and St. Paul; and behold him in a greater majesty and brightness than that was, because our capacities will be enlarged to make room for more illustrious manifestations of God to us. We shall live in that place, (as was said before), where *he dwells in light unapproachable* by mortal men; in the company of the holy angels, who, as so many stars of glory, will add, if it be possible, to the splendour of that place; and with our blessed Saviour, God-man, whose glorified body we shall behold: and so behold it, that we shall *bear the image of the heavenly, as we have borne the image of the earthly*. We shall be made immortal, that is, we shall be *ever with the Lord*, in such glorious bodies as his is: so that in ourselves we may see the glory of God.

For it must be noted here, that though our happiness will begin when our spirits depart this life; yet it will not be perfected till the Son of God shall come the second time to raise

[g] Exod. xxiv. 11. [h] Ver. 5.

our bodies out of the dust, that they may have a part with our souls in a never-dying life. Till then, the happiness I speak of, it must be confessed, will not have its crown or utmost consummation. But yet the soul in the mean time (I shall prove in its proper place) doth not lie asleep, nor hath all its powers bound up in a cold and lethargic dulness; though it have not attained the utmost enjoyment of that good for which it hopes. Our Saviour seems to make these two distinct things; the putting us in possession of everlasting life, and the raising us up at the last day: *This is the will of him that sent me, that every one which seeth the Son, and believeth on him, may have everlasting life, and I will raise him up at the last day*[i]: which he repeats again[k]. The former of which expressions may well denote the comfortable hope we have of happiness, when soul and body shall be untied; and the other, the perfection of this happiness, when they shall be again united. We shall enter into a great part of felicity when we quit these earthly tabernacles; our souls shall then feel themselves alive, and alive in the midst of those delights that will still increase and never have any end: and they shall joyfully expect the resurrection of the dead, and the glory wherein our Saviour shall then appear, and all his saints together with him; who, having received *abundance of grace, and of the gift of righteousness, shall reign in life by Jesus Christ.*

Thus I have said a little concerning this great promise of *seeing God;* and it is so little, that I feel myself unsatisfied, and would fain penetrate further, or at least speak more distinctly of this *eternal life.* But this small glance we have had of it may well awaken our souls, and excite them in the worst condition here to burst out into those words which the author of the Commentaries upon Job (under the name of Origen[l]) puts into that holy man's mouth:

"Thither will I go, where the tabernacles of the righteous are, where are the glories of the saints, where is the rest of the faithful, where is the consolation of the godly, where is the inheritance of the merciful, where is the blessedness of the undefiled. Thither will I go, where light and life dwell, where

[i] John vi. 40.
[k] Ver. 54.
[l] Lib. 1. p. 448, 449. [ed. Ben. tom. ii. p. 875, 6.]

glory and mirth, where gladness and exultation inhabit; from whence grief, sadness and sighing, fly away; where the former tribulations, which afflict the body upon this earth, are no more remembered. Thither will I go, where we shall lay down our troubles, where we shall have a reward of our labours; where is the bosom of Abraham, where the propriety of Isaac, where the familiarity of Israel; where are the souls of the saints, where the choirs of angels, where the voices of archangels; where is the illumination of the Holy Ghost, where the kingdom of Christ, where the never-ending glory, and the blessed sight of the eternal God the Father. Thither will I go, there I hope to arrive: not complaining, not finding fault, much less cursing and blaspheming; but blessing and praising, and with giving of thanks, saying, The Lord gave, the Lord hath taken away; as it pleased the Lord, so it is come to pass....Whatsoever pleases God is good; whatsoever pleases him is just. It pleased him to give; his pleasure was good: it pleased him to take away; his pleasure was just. All that the Lord wills is life, is light, is rest and peace, is eternal blessedness. Whatsoever pleases the Lord therefore, whether to enrich or to impoverish, all is incorruptible and endless bliss. Blessed is the man, O Lord, whom thou chastenest. As pleases the Lord, so it is. Let the name of the Lord be blessed world without end. Amen."

CHAP. II.

A more particular discourse of this Life.

THERE is the greatest reason that all Christians, as the same author goes on, "should say and do and think thus in all circumstances, and in all things that occur;" and say so with the devoutest, the most humble and cheerful submission to him: since it is the will and pleasure, you heard just now, of this great Lord, that his Son Jesus should give us, after our short labours or sufferings here, *everlasting life*. The very name of which sounds so delightfully, that we cannot well presently cease to speak of it, nor choose but desire to be better acquainted, if it be possible, with so transcendent a bliss. It concerns us more than any thing else to understand it, and to

be sure of it: for the hope of it is our refuge, the anchor, the stay, yea the joy and comfort of our hearts. And therefore, for the sake of those who desire to be led into a more particular knowledge of this happiness, I shall venture something further in the description of it: and know not how to conduct them better in this inquiry, than by explaining, as clearly as I can, these two words, LIFE, and the ETERNAL duration of it.

And if the nature of the first be examined, you will find that LIFE is nothing else but the exercise of all those faculties and powers which are proper and peculiar to us, upon their true and natural objects. Whence it is that wicked men are said, in the sacred style, to be *dead;* because nothing that is reasonable, nothing that constitutes the form of a man, acts in them: and on the other side, they that are converted from vice to virtue are said to be made *alive;* because such persons only employ and make use of all those powers which belong to reasonable creatures, and have devoted themselves to the best improvement of them. There is in a man, as Philo excellently expresses it[m], φιλάρετον καὶ φιλόθεον δόγμα, 'a certain notion and sense that loves God, and is a friend to virtue:' which when it is extinguished in the soul, the man is dead; and when it is revived, he is then again made alive. Since therefore St. John is speaking of the highest *life* that man is capable of, we are directed by this notion to look upon it as consisting in the most intended operation of all our powers, and that in their highest improvement, upon the greatest and noblest good, which, we saw before, is God himself.

Let us then consider, that man consists of soul and body as his essential parts; and that the soul, as the better part, must be most considered in this state of bliss; for from it bliss will he derived to the body: and therefore consider again what the several faculties and operations of our own souls are; and further, how much they shall be enlarged, and their force increased, by the mighty change which shall be made in us at death and at the resurrection; and lastly, how that all these faculties thus improved, and made bigger than they themselves can now comprehend, shall be filled to the brim with that

[m] Περὶ τοῦ τὸ χείρον, κ. τ. λ. [tom. i. p. 200.]

fullest good: and we shall be able to frame in our mind some distinct apprehension of this blessed life. Now we all know there are two faculties of our soul, the *understanding* and the *will*, upon which all operations depend: and it is as certain, that the satisfaction and felicity of the understanding can consist in nothing but in knowledge and contemplation of the truth; and that the happiness of the will consists in the love of that which is good: and by necessary consequence, the utmost satisfaction of both these is in the clearest contemplation of the highest truth, and in the most ardent love of the highest good. And therefore every one sees where we must begin to speak of this most blessed life.

I.

Which consists in the greatest treasures of divine knowledge, by the contemplation of the fairest object; which is the exercise of the prime faculty in man, and the good of his soul, as it is rational. For the better understanding of which let us consider, (1) that the soul in itself is apt to receive the notice of all manner of things: as we may easily discern, if we do observe how things most contrary in themselves can agree to lodge together in our mind; and we behold them one after another, or both together, without any disturbance, yea with abundance of pleasure. But (2) whatsoever our capacity now is, we find it is very little that we actually know, by reason of many impediments that we are clogged withal. And yet that little, when we are masters of any notion, communicates so much pleasure to us, that we are hugely desirous of having our minds enlarged to know more; and think it necessary to our happiness that we should be put into a condition of more free and undisturbed converse with truth. When therefore (3) we shall be rid of this clog, being either alone without this body, or having it made so spiritual that it will be under absolute command, and when we shall be in a still and quiet place, and enjoy perfect settlement of mind and peace of conscience, (the want of which is the only thing conceivable to disturb an unclothed soul in its contemplations,) we may reasonably hope to be put into that most desirable condition. But we finding (4) even in this narrow condition, wherein our souls are pent, such an infinite thirst after knowledge, that the mind of man is

never satisfied, we may guess by that how vehement this desire will grow, when our souls shall be no longer imprisoned, and their capacities so much enlarged. And therefore you may consider further, (5) that if this capacity and this desire in our souls be not filled, we shall be so far from leading an happy life, that we shall be more miserable than we are now; because we shall be more able to discern our wants. And thence we may conclude that, to make us happy, our mind shall be gratified, and its widened enlarged faculties filled with a divine light, proportionable to the power it hath to apprehend.

Well then, (6) considering that all objects are finite, and limited both in their nature and number, except God alone, who contains in his own being all things that are and can possibly be; our minds will certainly be carried to him, as the only object that can perfect their happiness, by satisfying their boundless desire of wisdom and knowledge. He alone can fill those minds who long to know all things, and who have an aptitude to a vaster knowledge than now can be conceived. And (7) who can doubt but he will fill them, since he hath promised, as you have heard by our Saviour, that the *pure in heart shall see him?* that is, know him and contemplate him in that *eternal life* which Christ hath revealed? For in this our enjoying God must begin: and it may well be called *seeing* in Scripture, because *knowledge* to the mind is the same with *seeing* to the eyes; and the *understanding* to the soul is the same with the eye to the body. And (8) we can as little doubt but that their souls will be most happy who shall lead such a life, which begins in their admission to this blessed sight. The contemplative life, even in this world, hath been thought by the greatest philosophers to be the most excellent, and in a manner divine; as Aristotle endeavours to prove by several arguments in the conclusion of his Ethics[m]. Now the more excellent the object is which we contemplate, the more excellent is the contemplation itself. From whence he concludes, in another place[n], that God must needs be the most blessed, because he perfectly and perpetually contemplates himself; whom all acknowledge to be the most excellent and perfect object. And since the understanding, says he, conceives by a kind of

[m] [Eth. Nic.] lib. x. c. 7, 8. [tom. ix. p. 208 sqq.]
[n] Metaphys. [lib. v. cap. i. tom. viii. p. 115.]

conjunction with that which it understands, so that in some sort they are made one; from thence also we may argue, that his contemplation of himself must needs be the most excellent, because it is the most intimate as well as constant and never interrupted enjoyment of the most excellent Being. The more then our mind can be fixed on God, and the more we understand of him, and the nearer we approach to him, the more we shall partake of his most blessed life; who, being most intimately one with himself, never ceases to contemplate his own most adorable perfections.

You will be the more sensible of this, if you do but imagine how happy many a man would think himself, could he but raise his mind to understand the wonderful frame of the world, and discover the rare wisdom that lies hid in the contrivance of every part of so goodly a fabric. If there be such pleasure in looking into the curious composure of this great book of the creatures, and searching after all the mysterious learning contained in it, (which employs the study of innumerable souls night and day,) you may easily conceive it must needs be a most sublime satisfaction to know him clearly who is the Author of this structure, whose artifice now ravishes contemplative minds into such admiration. They seem to have meant nothing else anciently who discoursed of the music of the spheres or celestial orbs, but the extraordinary pleasure and delight wherewith the minds of those philosophers were struck, who beheld the orderly and graceful motion of those heavenly bodies. And the same men said the mind of man was an harmony, because of the well-set notions whereof it is composed, and the sweet touches that it gives us when it is in tune, and runs into coherent thoughts and orderly speculations. Now look what joy it would be to a contemplative man, if he could know the art there is in the frame of the heavens, or if he could but so reflect upon his own soul as to know its nature, all its motions, the spring and the manner of them, nay, but to know his own body, which, as the Psalmist says, is so *fearfully and wonderfully made*, that it astonishes our minds when we seriously think of it; and by this you may judge what an happy life it will be to be acquainted with God, by whose *wisdom the heavens were made, and all the host of them by the breath of his mouth*, and who *fashioned all our souls*,

and *curiously wrought* all the members of our bodies, where no eye could see but only his own; yea, to know so much of him, that ——

But it is not in my power to make you understand what this knowledge shall be, for that would be to place you in heaven. Nay, we cannot conceive how God himself should make us know it in this state; unless he work a change in us, and cause these bodily operations to cease. All that I can do is, to make you understand that our souls shall be enlarged to know more than now we can conceive, and that we shall be as inconceivably pleased in that knowledge: for the very hope of it now is not without its singular pleasure. You will ask, perhaps, But what is it that we shall know of him? Do you tell us of a mysterious darkness, or, which is all one, an inapprehensible light? This is but to know that we are ignorant. And who can fasten his heart on things of which he hath no perception? or delight in the thoughts of that with which he hath no acquaintance? I answer, We are already acquainted, blessed be God, with something of him; though, as I have said before, we *see but through a glass darkly* [o]. As a glass represents not the thing itself, but its image; and he that sees a thing in a glass doth not know it immediately from its self, but from its image; such is the knowledge we have of God in this life. We know him by the effects of his wisdom, power, and goodness; and by the revelation he hath made of his mind and will in his gospel. We know him not immediately and by himself; but we know, as it were, an image of him in his works and in his word. And though this knowledge be but obscure, and not so clear as we desire, yet so much is plainly revealed that one day we shall *see him face to face:* that is, we shall be more nearly present to him, and immediately contemplate him; who is a mind and spirit, joining himself to our very mind by himself, and not by an image.

What that is, some excellent souls seem also to have had a little taste of here in this world; by "gasping with the mouth of their heart (as St. Austin speaks [p]) to the fountain of life, that receiving a small sprinkling from thence, they might perceive after some sort so great a thing." For he saith, that as he and his mother were discoursing together, a little before she

[o] 1 Cor. xiii. 12. [p] Confes. lib. ix. c. 10. [tom. i. col. 166.]

died, of the life of holy souls in the other world, they had their thoughts carried by degrees above all things sensible, till they touched it a while with the whole stroke of their heart. And "could we but silence the tumult of the flesh, could we make all imaginations of the earth, the air, and the heaven itself, lie quiet and still; could the soul itself not stir, but, by silencing its own thoughts, go beyond itself; could we but listen alone to him that made all things, and hear him alone speak, not by them, but by himself; so that we heard his word not by a tongue of flesh, nor by the voice of an angel, nor by the darkness of a similitude, but him whom our soul loves in all these it could hear without these: (as he and his mother then did, when with a swift thought they touched that eternal Wisdom who is over all:) we might easily and sensibly perceive what eternal life is by such a moment; and conclude, that if this moment was continued, and, all other lower ways of thinking vanishing, this alone remained, it would be no less than to *enter into the joy of our Lord.*" Thus he and she discoursed, till this world and all the pleasures in it were forgotten; and she cried out, 'Son, there is nothing that I delight in in this life.'

Now the hope we have, that what some have felt for the twinkling of an eye by an intimate conjunction of their soul with God, we shall all at last feel in endless life, is a mighty attractive to our hearts; the greatest of all other, though we cannot reach it here. Therefore the good we are to enjoy is so desirable, because it is bigger than all our present thoughts; and the greatness of it is not hid from our eyes because we should not understand it, but because we cannot. What more powerful argument can there be to move our affections than the consideration that, though we know not these things, what they are and what the manner of their enjoyment is, yet we know that they shall be known and enjoyed? and we know also so much of them and of other things as gives us assurance that the fulness of that knowledge will be beyond all thought pleasant and delightful to us. For (1) it is now so great a pleasure to the mind, to behold the wisdom which appears in the smallest mite that creeps on any part of this earth, that we cannot but be sensible the highest perfection of it is, to have any conception of the wisdom, the power, the goodness,

the eternity, immensity, truth, purity and providence of Almighty God; which the longer we look upon, the more we find our minds enlarged, and their thirst increased. This perfection of pleasure then (2) cannot but be strangely advanced, when we shall come to *see him face to face*, and to *know him as we are known:* for our thoughts of him in that state, as was said before, will differ as much from our present conceptions as the understanding of a grown man doth from that of a child. And then likewise (3) we may discover some divine perfection of his which no man ever thought of before. New beauties may reveal themselves to us, of which we have not now the least notice: because God is *all*, and therefore contains more in his essence than we ever framed any idea or notion of. So that perhaps, (4) we shall never cease to make some new discovery or other, but be still beholding more and more of his glory, to our endless satisfaction.

Let us but cherish some such thoughts as these, and we shall feel presently, by the incomparable pleasure wherewith they affect us, how powerful they are to draw our hearts towards this blessed *Life*, and all the ways that lead unto it. It was some great delight which they preconceived that made one philosopher put out his eyes, the better to be able to contemplate intellectual things: and which made another travel all the learned world over, that he might have the conversation of knowing men: and a third live twenty-two years in the fields, that he might discover only the manners and the workmanship of bees: and a fourth wish he could be able to look upon the sun, to see what it is, though he died the next moment after the sight: and all the wise men, to improve their knowing faculties, take such vast and incredible pains. Would any man so toil his brain as the mathematician doth, were there not a certain ravishment in knowledge surpassing all sensual delights? How is the silliest soul affected, when you bring it the notice of some new thing, of which before it was perfectly ignorant! And all pious hearts, how glad are they but to think that they are in the direct path to heaven! And the sense they have of God sometimes overspreading their hearts, how much doth it transport them, and make them long to have it continue for ever! And therefore think with yourselves, if these little notions of sensible things be so sweet, if a small

flash of light, that breaks in upon us from heaven for a moment, be so glorious, what will it be to have our minds so constantly illuminated with the divinest knowledge, as the air is with the beams of the sun? How desirable is that state, when we shall be all shining, when our inheritance shall be light, and when we shall be able to look upon the noon-day brightness?

We all find, that a pure and unspotted beauty hath a strange power in it to charm the dullest minds. Let us suppose then, with a modern philosopher, that there were a beauty whose colours were so radiant and bright, that our eye should not be able to look upon it without the assistance of some new-found spectacles; by which the lustre of the colours, and the exceeding great purity of its light, might be kept from striking our eye with too piercing a splendour: do you not conceive that, if there were such an object, and such an help to your eye, you should be presented with a sight more ravishing than you ever yet beheld? and that you would desire never to put off those spectacles, which fortified your eye to see so fair a beauty, unless you could hope to have your eye made so strong, that of itself it should be able to behold it? Ponder then within yourselves, that just as the pleasure, in such a case, would arise together with the excellency of the object, and the increased power of the eye; so will the delight of seeing so sublime an object as God by our raised and strengthened souls, exceed all that which we now perceive in any worldly good, or even in God himself. And according to the degree to which our faculties shall be advanced and empowered, which may be as much as God pleases, so certainly will the fulness and the overflowing measure of the delight be, which rises and falls according to the alterations that are in us; for in God there is none at all.

To all this I have one consideration more to add: that the soul, as you heard before, by knowledge becomes, in a manner, what it knows: not indeed by being changed into the object, but by receiving the object into itself. As we see some bodies admit others so entirely into them, that they have all the qualities of the nature which they have assumed; (iron, for instance, in the fire becomes red, and warms or burns according as other bodies approach it;) so our minds, by the knowledge they have of things, are after a sort united to them, and par-

take so far of their qualities, that heaven and earth do not differ more than two souls do, who have fixed their thoughts, the one on earthly, the other on heavenly things. And therefore, when we shall come to know God face to face, the sight of him will be nothing less than a full possession of him, a kind of becoming what he is, in a true and real (as divines speak) though not essential likeness of him, in wisdom, righteousness, goodness, immortality, and, I may add, power too, because we shall perfectly command ourselves, and have our present unruly thoughts and affections in a due subjection to his sovereign will. For if, as the apostle saith, by beholding now (without a veil, but) in a glass the glory of the Lord Christ, we are *changed into the same image from glory to glory*[q], then much more, when we shall come without the help of words and writings to behold the face of God himself, we shall be transformed into his image; and, by being assimilated to his divine nature, be made partakers of the joys and pleasures which are inseparable from it.

"And if the transfigured humanity of Christ (as Anselm meditates[r]) in the company of two saints gave such delight when it was seen but for a point of time; O how great will the pleasure be of seeing the Deity among the choirs of angels! If Peter, beholding the glorified humanity, was affected with such a joy, that he desired never to part with that sight, what shall we think of those who shall be counted worthy to see the divinity?" We may ask the question as oft as we please, but can no more give an answer to it now than the disciples could tell, till they beheld it on the holy mount, what it was for their Master to be transfigured. Then we shall understand it, when we come to the high and holy place where Jesus is, of which that mountain was but a figure. For the present we must be content, if we can raise up our minds to some small conceptions of its greatness by such considerations as these. On which I have the longer insisted, because they lay the foundation of what follows, and lead our thoughts to the easier understanding of it.

II.

And if the nature of this life be further examined, you will

[q] 2 Cor. iii. 18. [r] In Matt. xvii. [p. 164 B.]

find the mind is not the only faculty that shall be gratified; but the will shall conceive a love as great as the knowledge of which I have discoursed. For as God is the highest object of the understanding, being the prime Truth, so he is the chiefest object of the will, being the first and best Good. And therefore, as the understanding shall then most clearly know him, so the will, in like manner, shall most ardently love him, and find perfect satisfaction in that love. There is a necessary connection between these things; and it cannot be otherwise, but that from the best good clearly known there will flow the greatest love; drawing along with it the greatest delight, and the most perfect repose. And therefore, to *see God* virtually contains in its notion both love and delectation, with rest or satisfaction. Love naturally flows from thence, as from its fountain; and the other naturally flow from love: which is the highest act of that faculty which we call the will, as knowing and contemplating is of the understanding. Desire, indeed, is the first motion of it, when any thing is apprehended to be good for us; but that will there be quenched in possession and enjoyment: and no more of it can be conceived to remain than a longing after the continuance and increase of this happiness; which yet will be so certain, that we shall be rather confident than desirous.

The will therefore, having such a glorious object always before it, will be wholly employed in love, and spend itself, without any decay, in flames of affection towards this universal good, which shines so fairly and brightly in its eyes. It will apply itself to the enjoyment of it with as great a vehemency as it can; and, laying its mouth (as St. Austin teaches me to speak) to the spring of all happiness, do more than taste the sweetness of it. We may expect to have it filled with those delicious pleasures which we know attend on love, and which, in that state, will be proportionable to the greatness of the good that is embraced, and to the strength and ardency of the embracement.

And whereas here in this world men are wont to love beyond all reason, whereby their love becomes adulterate, and is mixed with so many discontents, that it proves but a bitter-sweet; there, our understanding (as you have heard) will be in its full growth and highest pitch; so that, as nothing which is reason-

able shall be omitted to be done, nothing likewise shall be done that is unreasonable. This love will be grounded upon the clearest judgment; this flame kindled by the purest light; so that there will be no disquiet or trouble in it, but perfect rest and peace.

And whereas in this world men's affections flow to things that are not near so big as themselves, (i. e. as their own desires,) and so they languish, and faint, and fall sick, even in the enjoyment of the best good that it affords, because they find it is not a supply proportionable to their want or to their expectations; there will be no such emptiness or want of satisfaction in those celestial enjoyments, because we shall embrace not only our proper good, but that which is commensurate to our desires, and beyond our hopes. Our affections will not fall then upon that which cannot sustain the whole weight of them; but, feeling themselves borne up to the greatest height of love, by a good so full that it will leave no room for complaint or uneasiness, they will enjoy the most solid rest and satisfaction.

Do but conceive then in your minds what a pleasure it is here in this life to love and to be beloved; and you will have some notion whereby to take a measure of the life we are speaking of, which will consist in such mutual love and delightful correspondencies. And they who have neither father nor mother, wife nor children, near kindred nor relations whereon to place their affection, let them consider, if they have but a singular friend, what the pleasure is that two persons, who sincerely and purely love, take in the sweet company and conversation of each other. Or, if I must suppose any man to be so unkind and so unhappy as to have no love for anybody but his own self, let him think what contentment he hath, and how he is pleased, if he can arrive any thing near to a quiet enjoyment of his dear self. And such a delightful state may be a small image of heaven, where holy souls will love God with a far greater flame than ever they did (or shall then) love themselves; because he will appear infinitely more lovely, and to bear also a far greater love to them than it is possible for them to do to themselves.

Now none can tell how transporting it will be to a good soul when it feels itself the beloved of God, as well as full of love to

him; because we cannot think how great the love of the Almighty is unless we could know how great he is himself. This is a thing that cannot fail to have a strange power over our affections, and to master them so that we shall be taken quite out of ourselves: for we all extremely love to be beloved

If any neighbour show us an unexpected and undeserved kindness, we are apt to think he is the best person in the world; and the poorest wretch that is, if we see in him the undoubted signs of an hearty love to us, we cannot choose but requite it with some expressions of kindness back again. Nay, if a dog, as I have said elsewhere, or such a dumb creature do but fawn upon us, and delight in our company, and with a great deal of observance follow us wheresoever we go, we cannot but be so far pleased with this inclination towards us as to make much of it, and to be troubled to see any harm befall it, and to love to see it play and be well pleased. Judge then what a pleasure it will be to pious souls to find themselves beloved of him who hath put these kind resentments into our nature. To what an height will the sweet breathings of his love blow up the flames of theirs! Into what ecstacies will they fall when they feel, by the happy fruits, what an exceeding great affection their heavenly Father bears to them! It is above our present thoughts to apprehend the joy that will then overflow them; but we may conceive a little of it if we remember that *God is love*, and that by our love *he will be in us*, and by his love *we shall be in him*.

But, if you please, let us fall much lower than this, and only represent to ourselves how great an happiness we shall account it to be beloved of the whole family of God in heaven. Look down from the highest angel to the smallest infant that shall be blessed there, from the noblest to the meanest in that celestial court, and there is not one of them but will love us, and be ready to show their sincere and most affectionate kindness towards us. They that are the greatest in that glory will be the greatest lovers; they that enjoy most of God will be disposed to let us enjoy most of them. For there is no pride nor envy in the heavenly quire; but the more any are beloved, the more they will delight in the most effectual expressions of their love. And how can they choose but interchange to each other unspeakable contentment who live in the comfort of such

indissoluble amity and friendship? Nothing can be thought of beyond this to set forth their happiness: but we must conclude with Philo[s], that this is the best definition of immortal life, ἔρωτι καὶ φιλίᾳ Θεοῦ ἀσάρκῳ καὶ ἀσωμάτῳ κατεσχῆσθαι, 'to be held fast in an unfleshly and incorporeal love and friendship of God.'

You will say perhaps that I have been now speaking of some other love besides his; which, supposing our hearts so fixed on him, we shall not be capable to entertain ourselves withal in the other world. For who can divert himself from so beloved a good, (which sends also such tokens of love to him,) and turn to any other object? We cannot think that they who love God perfectly will be inclined to love any thing else. And you may think so still, if you please, without any prejudice to what I have said. This will but make that *life* the more desirable, and move us to wish for such an happy state; where God will be in all our thoughts, and we shall always love him, and yet love one another too. For these are not at all inconsistent, but we may delight ourselves in the sweet society of angels and saints, and yet always see God; because we see and love him in every thing. They will be *his* beauties which we shall behold in them. Those holy ones will shine in *his* glory. So that our affections will not incline to run to any person merely for himself; but because we behold the face of God in him, and see his graces wherewith he is adorned. All the love there will be divine: and the more of God shall appear in any persons, the more lovely they will be; and the more we shall be ravished with their company, and rejoice in a happy league of friendship with them.

Well then, withdraw your thoughts a while from all the things you love here, and raise them above to look at love where it reigns, and hath an uncontrolled empire: behold it sitting on its throne, advanced to its utmost pitch of perfection, and showing itself in its full glory: and then keep the beginnings of this heavenly Life out of your souls if you can. It will be impossible you should not think there is nothing so much to be desired as to be all love. O happy life, will you say, where they love as much as they are able! and where they shall be able to love more than now can be conceived!

[s] Περὶ φυγάδων. [tom. i. p. 554.]

and where they will be beloved more than they can love; and have their love hereby heightened, when they reflect upon it, in an endless circle of joy and pleasure! Let us enter upon this life with all the speed we can make. Let us begin it this very moment; and endeavour that no moment may pass hereafter but in the love of God. For there is no heart so stony (sure) and insensible, that will not be dissolved into flesh, and receive any impressions from God, if it be once touched with the serious thoughts of this state of love. No soul so hard frozen and icy, that will not be thawed and melted to run whither God pleases, when it doth but feel the least spark of this heavenly fire fall down upon it. Do but go from the reading of this with the thoughts of this happiness burning in your breasts, and preserve the fire for one hour from going out; and you cannot imagine, till you try, to what an heavenly temper it will purify and refine your spirits. It will make you heartily in love with the life of Christ here, which leads to such a blissful life in the other world. You will zealously follow those holy desires and resolutions which you will necessarily feel it inspiring you withal: and you will not suffer any temptation whatsoever to divert you from that earnest pursuit; but still be saying, as St. Austin begins and ends his Confessions[t]:

"Thou, Lord, hast made us for thee, and our heart is uneasy and restless until it repose itself in thee: who, being that good which needs no good, art always at rest; for thou thyself art thine own rest. But to understand this, what man will give to man? what angel to angel? or what angel to man? Let it be asked of thee, let it be sought in thee, let it be knocked for at thee. So, so shall it be received, so shall it be found, so shall it be opened. Amen."

III.

And the more we think of it, the more we must needs still desire it; because, our understanding being filled with the knowledge, and our will with the love of the chiefest good, we shall sensibly perceive a divine joy resulting from these, and flowing into our heart with inexpressible pleasure. For it is essentially included in every act both of that knowledge and that love, as may be clearly discerned by what hath been already said. We

[t] [Lib. i. cap. 1. tom. i. col. 69 B; lib. xiii. cap. 38. col. 244 C.]

are now compounded of different, and sometimes contrary passions; which frequently disquiet us and disturb our peace, by falling out with our reason, and with one another. But in that blessed life there will be no such troublesome mixture; no fear, no sorrow, no hatred, no anger, or any the like remaining: but joy alone, advanced to the greatest height of glory, will be left in the possession of the whole soul, and have the sole dominion of it to itself. The reason is, because we shall for ever have the presence of the greatest good; which will exclude the presence of any evil, to give us the least fear of losing what we love. That is the original of all our passions: as we are glad when we enjoy any thing that we love; so we are troubled when we want it, or when we lose it; and we are full of care and solicitude when we eagerly pursue it; and rise up in hatred and displeasure at that which opposes our desires. When love then is secure by the possession of that supreme good whom no evil can approach, the cause of all other passions will be banished, and joy alone be left to triumph in the conquest of them. For which cause this heavenly joy must needs be the more excessive, when we shall have nothing else to do but to rejoice. This will mightily increase the greatness of it, that there will be no employment for the rest of our passions, which here, whether we will or no, take their turns together with it: and consequently, there will be nothing to diminish the greatness of it by any trouble or disorder that can be given it.

For the proof of which I need only refer you to the foregoing discourses, and desire you to reflect upon what you have read of the *knowledge* and *love* of God. You could not but observe how joy and pleasure was so inseparably knit to them and interwoven with them, that I could not well speak of them but I must touch upon this also.

1. As for the first of them, we all feel a certain complacency, which our very senses, as well as our understanding takes in objects conformable to them; even before our appetite moves at all towards them. *Truly the light is sweet,* says the wise man, *and a pleasant thing it is for the eyes to behold the sun*[x]. Look then how much the divine light excels all other, and how

[x] Eccles. xi. 7.

much the majesty and splendour of the Author of nature is beyond the best of his works, the glory and brightness of the sun; and so much sweeter and more pleasant will it be for our mind to be filled with that light, and to behold that first and original beauty from whence all other are derived. We cannot *think* of God and of our Saviour now without a singular joy: and therefore we shall not be able to *see* them without an excess of it.

2. And, secondly, as for love, joy is a no less necessary attendant on it, or rather is entwined with it; being nothing else but that delight and pleasure which springs up from the sense of any good that we have taken possession of. So that look how great the good is to which the passion of love hath carried us; proportionable will be the joy, when we feel that we are owners of it. And if it now please us so much to think that we are really beloved of God, and of his Son Jesus; what an endless pleasure will the sense of their love yield us when it hath placed us in heaven! Do but consider how vast the love of the Lord Jesus is in coming down from heaven to us, and that he knows better reasons of his love than we do, and that his own pleasure is concerned in loving us, and that he cannot but finish his love to those who are purchased with his blood, and are of his Spirit; and it will give a marvellous satisfaction to your heart at present. But what it will do then, when he will have expressed all his love to us, and perfected his kind intentions towards us, we are not able to tell. We can only consider a little further, how he hath plainly told us, that they who love him will *rejoice* now, because he is gone to the Father[y]. And therefore it must needs be an additional pleasure in the other life to *see* (what we here *believe*) our dearest Lord shining in the glory of God the Father, and enthroned on the right hand of the Majesty in the heavens. It will be an exceeding high satisfaction to us to behold him, who loved us so much, and was so ill requited for it by men, so gloriously rewarded for it by God himself.—But it is so easy to apply what hath been said to this purpose, that I shall leave such considerations as these to your own diligence, and note something that is not altogether so obvious.

[y] John xiv. 28.

3. Which is, that pious souls will considerably augment their joy by the reflections they will make upon their happiness, and the strong attention of their mind to their own delight and pleasure: for we are never so truly delighted as when we find that we are not deceived in the comfort and contentment which we promised ourselves; and when we take notice of all the pleasing motions that are in our hearts, and duly mark and observe the sweetness of them. Before this reflexion and self-observation, our souls are only touched by the objects which they apprehend, and receive such impressions as they are able to make there: but by this means the soul touches and strikes itself, sealing those impressions deeper, and pressing them harder upon our spirits. The presence of a friend, without asking leave, excites a joy and sudden passion of pleasure in our hearts upon his very first approaches; but when we consider with ourselves, not only that he is our friend, but how good a friend he hath been, and what joy he hath now and many other times given us; we then affect ourselves with his presence and sweet company, and make the joy greater by minding how great it is. For it is the highest kind of life in this world which hath an apprehension that it lives. This makes the life of a man above the life of beasts, and his pleasures above those that they enjoy. This is it also which makes a man in a lethargy to be no better than dead, because he hath no perception of his own life. The quicker therefore and the more lively this apprehension of our life and the happiness and contentment of it grows, the more blessed and joyful will the *life itself* be which we shall then lead. If, by loving without seeing, we *rejoice* in this world *with joy unspeakable and full of glory*[z], how glorious will the joy be there, when *sight* or knowledge shall be, if I may so speak, in its high noon, and *love* at its full sea; and when there will be no declension, much less night, nor the least ebb any more; and when we shall with the most accurate quickness instantly apprehend and observe every circumstance that adds to our unconceivable happiness!

We have many considerations left us now, in the gospel of Christ, to refresh our minds withal; from his great love in be-

[z] 1 Pet. i. 8.

coming a man for us, from his cross, from his resurrection, from his ascension and sitting at God's right hand, from his promise of coming again, and the hope we have of reigning with him for ever; but by not attending to such blessed truths as these we lose the comfort of them. And when they are mightily urged upon us by others, and the Holy Spirit of God also touches us, and makes us sensible of the glad tidings that they bring us, we lose still a great deal of the pleasure by not pressing them further upon our hearts, marking how they are affected with them. And when all this is done, we shall still feel a damp upon our spirits, unless we can comfortably reflect upon our own sincere love to God, and assure ourselves that we are persons qualified for this supreme joy. But there will be no danger of any such defects in that happy world above, where holy souls will as readily improve, as they easily discern, every thing that gives them satisfaction. As nothing will escape their observation which brings any joy along with it, so they will please themselves in the contemplation of their own pleasures till they grow greater. And so far they will be from wanting any reflections on themselves as the persons whom God loves and delights to honour, that they cannot but perceive it, and be transported with the joyful sense of it. For, if we should speak strictly, this joy will be so great, that it will need no attention to it. Its own strength will make it be most sensibly felt; and (as some have ventured to express so sublime a state) it will, by the transcendent force of its delight, essentially reflect upon itself.

4. But let us come down from these heights, and consider again, that, as much as the joy which God hath in himself exceeds all other satisfaction, so much will the joy which we shall have in him exceed all that we have or can enjoy in any other thing. *In his presence* (says the Psalmist[a]) *is fulness of joy, and pleasures everlasting:* which cannot fail to be the portion of those who shall be admitted into his presence, and have the happiness to see him. For since by our sight of him we shall be assimilated to him, (as was said before,) and made in a manner such as he is, we must needs be partakers with him in his joy as well as in other things, and have such a measure of it as exceeds all the measures that our scanty apprehensions

[a] Psalm xvi. 11.

can now take of so full a good. It is too little to say that this joy alone exceeds all worldly pleasures, as far as the longest life exceeds a moment, or this whole world the least mote we see in the sunbeams: rather we may say, as far as God surmounts this world, or eternity time; between which there is scarce any comparison to be reasonably made.

5. To all which you may subjoin this, as the highest consideration of all, that such are the perfections of the Divine nature, such is his infinite bounty, that they who are united to him in love will meet with an infinite satisfaction. All objects of our delight here may be comprehended by our understanding, and we may see *an end of all their perfection*. For which reason they may be slighted by our will as less than ourselves, and unable to give us the contentment we desire. It is at our choice whether we will love them or no, or at least what portion of our love we will bestow upon them; and therefore it is no great joy that they can give to one who feels how much he is above them. But God now is so full, so infinitely above us, that he entirely satiates the heart of those that love him. We cannot refuse him when we are perfectly acquainted with him; nor is it at our liberty to love him but to such a measure. No, he will force our soul then to love him and delight in him as much as it can; yea, more than naturally it could without the presence of such a good; more than it believed it should ever have been able to love. And this is not a force of which the soul grows weary, as in other cases when it is strained beyond its present capacity; but a pleasing violence, to which it opens itself, and, perceiving the power of that great good, would willingly be more possessed of it. The pleasure that it feels sweetly dilates it, and with a grateful constraint so stretches and widens it, that the extension becomes natural to it. And with all this new love created in it, the joyful soul will for ever remain thus big; embracing its most beloved good, and delighting itself in this largeness of love.

This is the incomparable pleasure of the *life* that Christ promises. All other joys are but cold and dull, in respect of the flames and spirits of this. It is but a dream of drowsy delight which we enjoy here, in comparison with that substantial sprightly pleasure which our souls will find in the bosom of

God's love, wherein they will repose themselves with such a transport, as if they would lose themselves to be all one with him. Whosoever he be therefore that is insensible of all other charms, let him hearken to this, and see what pleasure can do to make him in love with this life of our Lord. Pleasure, I say, which all mankind most passionately desires, be it never so weak and imperfect: the light of all good things, which should we suppose separated from human life, it would be nothing but darkness and horror. And if thou knowest not yet what spiritual delight means, let thy fleshly pleasures tell thee something of this happiness. If thou art not so sottish as never to have a thought of any thing beyond the satisfaction of thy fleshly lusts, think how much more noble a spirit and the pleasures of it are than a body and all its delights: and then raise up thy mind a little higher, to consider, that if pleasure have now such power over thee, here are the greatest to invite thee: pleasures that as much exceed those of the spirit as they do those of the flesh; pleasures at God's right hand; the very joy of the Most High, the Father of spirits; the pleasures of God himself. O come, come, if thou lovest thyself, and thy own perfect satisfaction, come, I say, whosoever thou art that eagerly followest after pleasure, to the contemplation of these joys which are so sublimely sweet: and be content to part with all other, if that be the only means to be possessed of these. What if thou shouldst suffer by devoting thyself to pursue these in many outward accommodations, nay, if thou shouldst lose this life to attain that which is eternal? It will be no dear purchase, but bring thee in an increase of more than an hundred thousand fold. Whatsoever thou expendest here for the Lord Jesus, he hath given thee his bond for it, that it shall be repaid with *good measure, heaped up, pressed down, thrust together, and running over into thy bosom*[b]. An overflowing joy it will be, but it runs over into our own breasts. None of it will be spilt beside ourselves, but it will trickle down with a delicious sweetness into our own hearts: which should stir up our most thirsty desires, methinks, to be made partakers of it. If we foretaste the least drop of it in such meditations as these, it should fill our hearts with sharp

[b] Luke vi. 38.

longings after more, and dispose us to say, with the devout father I named at the conclusion of the foregoing particular,

"Far be it from me, O Lord, far be it from the heart of thy servant, to think myself happy, whatsoever joy I have in this world. There is a joy which is not the portion of the wicked, but of those who serve thee freely; whose joy thou thyself art. And that is the truly happy life, to rejoice to thee, because of thee, for thee. This is it, and there is no other [c]."

"O how far distant is this present life from that! Here is falsehood, there is truth. Here is disturbance, there is sure possession. Here is the worst bitterness, there eternal love. Here dangerous pride, there secure joy and triumph. Here we fear lest he that is a friend should on a sudden turn an enemy: there a friend is always constant, because no enemy can be admitted thither. Here, whatsoever good we have we are afraid to lose it: there, whatsoever we receive shall be preserved by him, who takes care that neither we pass away from it, nor it from us. Here is death, there is life. Here all things that God hath created; there God himself instead of all, and in all things.

"But what human tongue can extol that which no sense of mortals can comprehend? We will go thither, that we may comprehend it. We will go and see there that which eye hath not seen, and hear there that which ear hath not heard, and understand there what the heart of man cannot now conceive: and seeing, hearing and understanding, we shall exult with unspeakable joy. And what joy is that, where no fear will be! What kind of joy will it be, when thou shalt see thyself a companion of angels, a partaker of the kingdom of heaven, in royal state with the King of all, desiring nothing, in possession of all things, rich without covetousness, administering without money, judging without successor, reigning without fear of barbarians, living an eternal life without death [d]!"

[c] August. lib. x. Confess. cap. 22. [tom. i. col. 182 D.]

[d] [Pseud. August.] Orat. contra Judæos, Pagan. et Arrian. [al. de symbolo.] cap. xxi. [tom. viii. append. col. 19.]

CHAP. III.

A further explication of the happiness of this life.

IV.

We must stay, as I have said before, for the resolution of such questions, till we enter into that joy: and for the present be glad to know, that our souls being thus happily disposed, shining with a divine light, satisfied with the divine love, and rejoicing in both, must needs issue forth in the most cheerful and delightsome praises of God, who hath preferred us to such a blissful state. For this we all find is one of the natural effects of joy here in this life. As it transports and raises the soul above itself; as it makes us eager to possess, if it were possible, more of that good which gives such delight; and as it makes us for the present forget all other things, all the cares and troubles of this life; and, indeed, so much betters and improves our soul, that of all other things we are not willing to forego it: so it never fails likewise to employ the tongue in praising and commending that good to which it owes itself. How barren soever the mind be, or what slowness soever there be in our tongues, joy and pleasure make us fruitful in thoughts, and quicken our speech to declare the content we take in the company of that which is the cause of it. Nay, the voice becomes bigger and louder by its means; and it never utters itself but with earnest notes of its high satisfaction. And therefore it is impossible for the ravished soul, when it is come to the delightful vision of God, to refrain from joining with the heavenly choir to give *glory to God in the highest*, that is, after the most excellent manner, and with the most exalted affections.

As the understanding, by reflecting upon the blessedness of the whole man, will excite an extraordinary joy in the heart, (as I have just now discoursed,) so by reflecting upon the fountain from whence that happiness flows, and earnestly observing the original of its enjoyments, it cannot but excite in itself admiration and wondering thoughts: and presently employ them to invent the noblest hymns and songs of praise, whereby to magnify and laud this glorious goodness of God.

And this will make still greater additions to the joy before spoken of, which must necessarily be intermixed with these most affectionate thanksgivings, as every one can witness who hath tried this heavenly employment, which the psalmist, in his experience, found so *good*, so *pleasant*, *and* so *comely*[d].

Were all the mercies of but one day placed now in a clear view before your eyes, or could you but at once behold all the blessings that are crowded into every moment, what admiration would it raise up in your hearts! what a volume of praises would you be able to compose! and how much sweeter would this one act of lauding and praising God be, than the enjoyment of all the good things you praise him for! Raise up your minds then to conceive the height of those praises that will be continually springing and bubbling up from thankful hearts, and always filling their mouths; when they shall be able to shoot their thoughts down to the very bottom of their days, and see all the curious providences of God about them, all the favours they have enjoyed, and all the dangers they have escaped as they passed through the tumultuous sea of worldly affairs. O what hallelujahs will it create, when these shall be represented thick together, or stand at once before us! and when we shall not only look upon the past loving-kindnesses of God in one train of thoughts, but in the next behold all our present enjoyments, the quiet shore where we are landed, with the riches and pleasures of the heavenly country! and when we shall also think again of those that are still future, which are always beginning, and never ending, always present, and always to come! This sure will make the voice of praise more loud and shrill, and every note so sweet, that it will give the most grateful touch unto the heart.

Look upon the little birds, and hearken how they chirp and sing in the wide and spacious air, where they have no limits set to their liberty: and then think what a cheerful life they lead in comparison with one that is perpetually cooped up in a cage, and spends many lonesome days and melancholic nights in that solitude. And look again upon your own souls, which we think are capable of the highest pleasures; and cannot you conceive a little how delightful they will find it to be always

[d] Psalm cxlvii. 1.

singing in the vastest liberty and freedom; to be spreading their wings in the boundless light to which God will bring them; and to be uttering their joys, as they see themselves encompassed on all sides with innumerable objects of contentment? O how infinitely will it transcend all that they are capable of while they are imprisoned, or rather pinioned, in this body! though one moment of those joys which are sometimes felt here by holy souls is not to be exchanged for all that the world can offer in its stead.

And these songs will be made the more melodious by the company that shall join together in the most harmonious consort. All the saints and angels will make up but one happy choir; and will all strive, we may imagine, with an holy emulation to excel each other, and without any envy contend who shall sing the loudest and sweetest praises to our Creator and Redeemer. And what delight, may we conceive, will they take in the delicate strains of each other! How will they be pleased to hear their own voices accompanied with the hymns of so many celestial creatures! How will the whole number be even rapt out of themselves by the melting airs of the whole choir, when they all lift up their voices together, as those myriads of holy ones which St. John saw acknowledging the Lamb *worthy to receive power, and riches, and wisdom, and strength, and honour, and glory, and blessing*[e], which, (as he says ver. 13,) all good Christians even in this world delight to ascribe *unto him that sits upon the throne, and to the Lamb, for ever and ever!*

The pagans had some little sense of this pleasure, as we may learn from Metrodorus himself; who, though an Epicurean, yet in these words, as Clemens Alexandrinus observes[f], spoke divinely:—"Remember, O Menestratus, who art born mortal, and hast received a life which will have an end, that ascending with thy soul, even till thou comest to eternity and the infinity of things, thou shalt see both things to come, and things that have been. For, according to Plato, we shall contemplate with the happy choir μακαρίαν ὄψιν καὶ θέαν, 'the blessed vision and spectacle:' where we, attending upon Jupiter, and others upon other gods, shall be admitted, if it be lawful to speak it, to

[e] Rev. v. 11. [f] Lib. v. Strom. p. 614. [p. 732. ed. Potter.]

celebrate the most blessed mysteries. Which we shall joyfully observe, being entire, and insensible of any of those evils which expected us in our latter days. And we shall be admitted to the mysterious contemplation of those perfect and steady sights in pure light; being ourselves pure and disengaged from this body, which we carry now about with us, to which we are tied as fast as an oyster is to its shell." They felt, it appears by these words, very strong motions in their souls after a sight of those things to which they could not reach while they were in these bodies. And they had a faint hope also, that when they were got loose from these shackles, they should neither be confined nor clouded, but in pure light and liberty rejoice and be glad in the love of their gods, who they expected would admit them to the knowledge of such secrets as they imparted only to their friends. For that is the meaning of celebrating the mysteries; which were secrets that all were not permitted to see, and when any had seen, they might not reveal; but were kept with festival joys, after the most solemn manner, by those who were thought worthy of them. To the delight of those feasts he compares the joy they should have in the other life; which they were wont to promise to all those who were admitted to the sight of their mysteries. There they fancied they should rejoice in a nobler manner than they did when they followed the pomp of Bacchus and Ceres; (to whose mysteries this author alludes;) and, without that noise and tumult which accompanied such trains, behold in quiet the unknown spectacles of the invisible world.

But if you think that all the expressions I have used borrow too much from sensible things, yet remember at least what delightful touches a sweet voice, or other excellent music, hath in any moment given your soul; and conceive then what a pleasure it would be to have two hours continued like that one minute, or your spirits so delicately moved for one whole day together. By this means you will the better understand the truth of what I have said: for just such is the pleasure of those souls, which now strike themselves and touch their own hearts with a lively sense of the goodness of God towards them; and which feel withal the finger of God giving the like strokes upon them. There is nothing so delicious as this, nothing so powerful to ravish them out of their bodies. The very strings would

crack, and the soul and flesh would dissolve their union, should there remain such a powerful and delightful motion for some hours, as for a little space they sometime feel transporting them. They cannot but imagine, that the prolonged harmony of one day, should it bless the soul, would make it account all the pleasures in this world harsh and troublesome; and cause it to cry out, as the man St. Hierome speaks of, who, after he had dreamt he was in paradise, called still to those who were about him, "Set me again in those flowery fields: restore me to those pleasant walks. O let me enjoy that melody once more; let me hear those sweet songs. Trouble me no more with any of these worldly noises; but bless me again with those heavenly touches."

Lift up your minds then by such thoughts as these, to conceive what not one day, or year, or age, but an eternity of such rare ravishing delight would be; and that is a part of that blessed Life which I am treating of. Which by your own confession must needs be more desirable than all that can be expressed by music and sweet airs, and melodious strains and songs, or any such like words: which must be acknowledged to be weak and imperfect, able to express only the outward images and shadows of those divine enjoyments. And the more perfectly you digest and frequently excite such thoughts as these, the more you will apprehend of this bliss; and the more impossible it will be that any thing should hinder you from beginning to be so happy, by devoting yourselves to a Christian life: one part of which is, to praise and bless the Lord at all times; to bear in your grateful minds a faithful remembrance of his benefits, and to express it as oft as you can in the most thankful acknowledgments. In which exercise whilst you seriously employ yourselves, you will be able thereby to know in part what the blessing of eternal life is, wherewith our Lord hath promised to reward our hearty obedience.

V.

And here it will be seasonable to add, that such will be our *knowledge* and *love* of God, and our true *delight* in him, that they will produce a most sweet harmony between our wills and his, and move us to yield a free and constant obedience to

him with all our powers. The *understanding*, which now is subject to many mistakes and errors, will then shine upon the *will* with the rays of the purest light. And the *will*, which now is oft too refractory, will not then in the least rebel against the understanding, but be obsequious to its illuminations. And the *affections* will be as ready to obey the will, and follow its motions: which will all agree with the mind of God, and perfectly correspond to his desires. His will shall be always done, and ours shall be but a sweet compliance with his. For our knowing him making us like him, will take away all liberty from us of doing any thing but what he would have us. And the whole appetite being so entirely filled and satisfied, as hath been said, with this great good, there can be no room left for any inordinate desires; but we must eternally cleave to God, and cannot be turned aside from him any more.

And it will not prove any trouble to us neither to be thus fast bound to his will, and observe all his motions: but we shall fly as swiftly about in that free light as the winged angels now do; who never fetch so much as one sigh when they receive his commands, but cheerfully in every thing obey his pleasure. Nay, it would be the greatest trouble to us if we should do otherways. We should create a disturbance in the midst of that heavenly rest, should we not thus readily obey him. One groan would spoil all the sweet accents of the joyful praises which are there continually offered. Much more would one act of disobedience be so jarring with that harmony, as to make us lose the pleasure of it. But there will be no danger of this; we shall all be changed, as the apostle speaks, not only in our body, but also in our spirit: and in this, as well as all other things, that our liberty of indifferency, the freedom we now have to choose good or to let it alone, yea, to choose evil as well as good, shall be turned into a cheerful spontaneous motion towards that which is good alone. The will, as some have expressed it, shall remain; but not the choice: we shall willingly serve God; but not choose whether we will serve him or no.

For that sight which we shall have of his beauty will not let us take our eyes off from him; and that love which flows from thence cannot but be exercised by those who have that blessed sight: and they that cannot but see and love so great a good

will not be able to turn their minds and hearts inordinately to any thing else. They therefore who shall be accounted worthy of that world to come will be free from sin, and from the fear of sinning; whereby they will be secure of perpetual blessedness: which is necessary to make us perfectly happy. For they are very short of it who are in danger or in fear of losing the felicity they enjoy. Both these will be far remote from that happy world; where they will be fixed in their happiness, because they will be fixed in their obedience: which as it may grow, it is possible, still more and more cheerful, so it will infuse a greater sense of the divine love into their hearts; and every act wherein they do the will of God may be rewarded perhaps with a greater increase of happiness.

Who would not choose then to obey God now, that hereafter he may not be able to do otherwise? Who would not strive to bring his will in subjection to Christ, that he may at last exchange his own will wholly for his; the liberty, that is, of a man, for the liberty of the Divine nature, which is always determined by an happy necessity to that which is good? Yea, who would not choose such an happiness as is always, it is probable, growing more perfect; the excellency of which we can never comprehend, because it will be growing more excellent? a life so noble, that every operation of it makes it more divine? It is no disparagement to its worth to say, that we cannot at first know all that we shall know, nor love so much as we shall be able to love, nor possess all the joy of our Lord: but it is rather a commendation of it, that after such an height of knowledge, love and joy, as we shall arrive unto at first, we shall be advancing to a greater nearness and familiarity with God.

VI.

But it is time to bring this discourse to a conclusion, when I have told you, that it is not the soul only which will be happy in this *eternal life*. That word, I said at the first, imports the supreme felicity of the whole man; and therefore man consisting of a *body* as well as a soul, that must come in for a share in this bliss, and at last be made partaker of it. Yet I shall not stay to tell you particularly what the *life* of the body shall be after the resurrection; because I have been longer than I

intended in describing the operations of our nobler part about its highest good. It shall be sufficient to give you but these two marks, whereby to know the exceeding happy condition to which it will be promoted. First, it must needs be transformed into a very noble being, which is to be the companion of such an exalted soul, and be capable to comply with it in these sublime operations. We read much of its brightness and glory, which the scripture seems to say shall be so great that it will contend with the splendour of the sun itself: and we may very well believe it, seeing it is to be the vesture of a spirit so illuminated by the vision of God. For which reason, among others, it may be that the apostle calls it a *spiritual body:* which as it needs no supports of meat and drink, and is made immortal, and no longer liable to any disease; so is it of a purer sense and a quicker power than this present flesh, moving with so much agility and ease, that we shall feel it is no burden to us. And the apostle indeed tells us, (which is the second thing,) that Christ by his power, which is *able to subdue all things to himself,* will *fashion it like to his own glorious body*[h]. Now what the brightness of that is, you may guess by the visions of the two great apostles, St. Peter and St. Paul.

The first of which, when he saw our Saviour transfigured in the holy mount[i], was so overcharged with joy, that the sight put him in a manner beside himself: for he *knew not,* saith the text, *what he said,* when he uttered those words, *Let us make here three tabernacles; one for thee, and one for Moses, and one for Elias.* He knew indeed that it was *good being there*[j], though he scarce knew where he was. This was the only thing in his thoughts, that they should be most happy men, might they never stir from that glorious place, but always remain thus transported, as at present he was. Let us be fixed here, was his wish; let us always live in such pure light, and enjoy such beautiful sights: from whence he was loath to take his eyes, or to leave such good company as now *appeared in glory*[k]. And yet this, you must remember, was no more than a glimpse of that glory which our Saviour was to have after his resurrection, and which he now shines in, and shall one

[h] Phil. iii. 21. [i] Matt. xvii. [j] Luke ix. 33. [k] Ver. 31.

day be revealed. Judge then, by this, what happy creatures they will be, whose bodies shall be made *like that glorious body*, which, when it was but a while transformed in this world, made the place seem no less than a Paradise. How illustrious will the condition of true Christians be when they shall not merely dwell in such *tabernacles* as St. Peter wished, but in bodies resembling that which was so transfigured, or rather of a far greater splendour: there appearing then, as I said, but a twinkling of that glory of our Saviour to whom we shall be conformed.

For if you observe it afterward, when the heavenly light of our Saviour's glorified body encompassed the other apostle, St. Paul, (to whom he appeared in his way to Damascus,) he could not look upon it as St. Peter had done upon the other; but it was so shining that it put out his eyes, he continuing *three days without sight*[1]. And, for any thing we know, he had never recovered the use of them more, had not the same Jesus restored his sight to him by a miracle. These senses of flesh were not able to bear a light so effulgent: it was to deprive them of all their operations to approach near to such a brightness. And yet such glorious creatures will our Lord make his faithful servants. So astonishing is his love, that he will never cease his kindness to them till they be "numbered among his saints in glory everlasting;" that is, till he impart his own most excellent glory to them.

Which signifies that they must be wonderfully changed from what our bodies are now in this vile state, wherein they are not capable to behold such a glory as shall then be revealed. But the serious belief and hope of it, founded upon the word of our Saviour and of those who were *eyewitnesses* of his majesty, is a marvellous comfort to us, and should make us study to purify ourselves more and more, and to *perfect holiness in the fear of God*. We should cleanse and refine our affections, and render them still more spiritual and heavenly; that being less moved with the things of this world, and finding our inclinations weaker towards them, we may more readily and cheerfully comply with the will of God, and prevent as much as we can the resurrection of the dead: when we shall have no lust

[1] Acts ix. 9.

to do otherwise than as God would have us, but shall entirely please ourselves in accomplishing his good will and pleasure.

For the more faithfully and eminently any persons serve the Lord Christ, out of pure love to him and to his Christian brethren, the greater marks of his favour will he set upon them. Their very bodies, it is probable, will shine in a greater glory, and be made so much the more illustrious, according as their light here shone brighter before men, and moved them to glorify their heavenly Father. For St. Paul seems to teach, not only that the bodies we shall have after the resurrection will differ as vastly from those we have now as earth does from heaven, but that those heavenly bodies which we shall put on will differ very much among themselves in brightness and glory. As *the glory of the celestial bodies is one, and the glory of the terrestrial another*, so, he tells us, (among the celestial,) *there is one glory of the sun, and another glory of the moon, and another glory of the stars; for one star differeth from another star in glory. So also is the resurrection of the dead*[m]. That is, some will have bodies more bright than others, and shine as stars of a greater magnitude, to note them to be persons of eminent rank, who have done very glorious service to their Lord.

The martyrs, for instance, whose bodies were slain or burnt to ashes for Christ's sake, we may well suppose will be more splendid than those who were laid in their graves in peace. Nay, the church in St. Austin's time, out of their great affection to them, wished to behold the scars of those glorious wounds which they received for Christ's sake, shining with a peculiar glory in their immortal bodies. "And perhaps," saith he[n], "we shall see them: for it will not be a deformity in them, but a dignity, and in the body will shine the beauty of their virtue more than of their body."

This the writers whom we call the Schoolmen imagine is the *aureola*, or little golden crown which the Judge will give to rare virtues. By which they mean some accidental reward superadded to the essential blessedness: like the little crown of gold wherewith the other crown upon the table of show-

[m] 1 Cor. xv. 40—42.
[n] L. xxii. de Civ. Dei, cap. 19. [tom. vii. col. 682 E.]

bread was finished, as the Vulg. Lat. renders Exod. xxv. 25, from whence this expression seems to be borrowed. But that the overplus of reward which Christ will give to some shall consist only in a peculiar brightness of their body, I see no ground to determine; because God hath so many other ways to crown the faith, and love, and hope of those whom he delights to honour. It is better to conclude all this discourse with the words of the same father, which follow a little after[o]:—"What and how great the spiritual grace of the body will be, because the time is not come to make experiment, I am afraid lest all that we say of it be rashly spoken." And therefore I shall only add, of which we may be certain, that, as Macarius observes, whether it be a greater or a lesser glory that we attain, we shall all shine together in one most blessed and glorious place. His words are these[p]:

"As birds produce feathers of a different kind, and some fly nearer to the earth, others further off, but all fly in one common air; or, as there is one heaven, which hath many stars in it, some greater than others, but all fixed in heaven; so the saints shall be differently planted ἐν ἑνὶ οὐρανῷ τῆς θεότητος, 'in one heaven of the Divinity,' and in one invisible country.' Thither let us all direct our paths, thither let us continually aspire, saying, as he does in another place[q], (to which I shall add the words of another great man:)

"O how ineffable are the promises of Christians, who have such glorious expectations, that the faith and riches of one single soul cannot be equalled by the glory and beauty of heaven and earth; though we take in all their furniture, and treasures, and variety, and goodliness, and bravery!" (And yet how fairly do these things shine in our eyes, and with what pleasure do we behold their beauty!) "If then the created life be so good, how good is that life which creates! If the salvation we receive be so pleasant, how sweet is that salvation which gives all salvation! If that wisdom be so lovely which understands the works of God, how lovely is that wisdom which of nothing contrived them all! Finally, if there be so

[o] L. xxii. de Civ. Dei, cap. 21. [col. 684 D.]

[p] Homil. 32. [§ 3. Galland. tom. vii. p. 121 A.]

[q] Macarius, Homil. 4. [§ 17. p. 18 C.]

many and so great delights in delectable things, what and how great is that delight which is in him that made all things delectable! He that shall enjoy this good, what shall he have? what shall he not have? He shall have what he will, and what he would not he shall not have . . . . If honour and riches be desired, God will make his good and faithful servants rulers over many things. Nay, they shall be called sons of God, and gods; and where his Son is, there they shall be heirs of God and coheirs with Christ. If they desire true security, there is none like that: for, certainly, they shall be as certain that these, or rather this good, shall never by any means be wanting to them, as they are certain they shall never leave it of themselves, nor God their lover ever take it away against the will of those he loves; nor any thing stronger than he be able to separate them and God. They shall rejoice therefore perpetually. And they shall rejoice as much as they love, and love as much as they know. And how much, O Lord, shall they know thee then? how much shall they love thee? Certainly, neither eye hath seen, nor ear heard, nor hath it entered into the heart of man in this life, how much they shall know thee, and how much they shall love thee in that. I beseech thee, O God, let me know thee, let me love thee, that I may rejoice in thee. And if I cannot do it to the full in this life, O that I may profit every day until it come to the full! Let thy knowledge grow in me here, and there be made full: let thy love increase, and there also be full: that here my joy may in hope be great, and there in possession full. Amen[r]."

CHAP. IV.

Of the eternity of this life.

From this larger (than was at first designed) consideration of the nature of this LIFE, pass we now to a short meditation of the ETERNITY of it; which indeed is the crown that God sets upon its head, the circle, if I may so speak, which wreathing

[r] Anselm. in Proslog. [capp. 24, 25. tom. i. p. 48.]

itself about this happiness, makes it to be our sovereign good. And it may not be unworthy our observation, that this *Eternity* of life is as far above the continuance of all other blessings heretofore promised as the *life* itself is. *Life* among the Jews, according to the letter of their law, signifying only all earthly good things; there was only a *long* life, not an *eternal*, in the land of Canaan, promised to them that kept that law. But quite otherwise the *life* promised by Christ consisting only in the enjoyment of spiritual and heavenly blessings; it is not a *long*, but an *eternal*, never-ending life, in the possession of these good things which he hath assured to us. It being but fit that as the life exceeds that which Moses promised; so the duration of it also should as much outrun his, as *for ever* extends itself beyond an *age*.

Now the word ETERNAL may be conceived to comprehend in it these three things.

I.

First, that there is nothing but *life* in this state of blessedness; which shall not be interrupted by any doleful accident. *Life* and *death*, I told you, in the holy language signify the same with *blessedness* and *misery:* and therefore the *eternity* of life must include in its notion a state of pure happiness, of mere and unmixed pleasure; without any thing that deserves the name of *death* to give it the least annoyance. There we may hope to be so happy as to know without mistake, and to be wise without folly, and to increase in knowledge without our present toil to acquire it. Love is there without hatred, jealousy or envy, joy without any sighing or sorrow, praises without complaints, obedience without reluctance, speed and alacrity without dulness and heaviness; in one word, perfect purity and holiness, without spot or blemish to sully the glory of it. As this lower region of the air we see is the place of clouds and darkness, thunder and lightning, storm and tempest; but to the dwellings of the sun and fixed stars none of these pitchy vapours ascend to obscure their brightness, or trouble their peace; just so is this world the scene of misery and vexation, confusion and disorder, our bodies are tossed with several storms, and our souls many times hurried with more violent tempests, the fierce gusts of their own passions; but when we

ascend to the region of light, and are clothed with the sun, we shall be out of the reach of these troubles, and find ourselves in a state of perfect rest and joy, without the least disgust to abate our contentment.

And what will make us despise this valley of tears, if this blessed hope have not force enough to lift our hearts above it? Who would not desire to come to the mount of *vision* and *transfiguration*, where we shall *see the Lord*, and be so changed thereby as to be made impassible as he is? Let the readers pardon me, if I so far digress as to ask them, What is this wilderness wherein you live, that you should love it better than that heavenly Canaan? What is *forty* years, or perhaps *seventy*, of toil and labour, to that *eternal* rest which Christ hath promised? Are not these husks contemptible in respect of the manna, *the bread of life, of which if a man eat he shall live for ever?* Is not our life here a dream, a shadow of life, in comparison with this life that is everlasting? Why then are you so hardly persuaded to take off your thoughts and affections from things beneath, and not so much to handle the thorns and prickles that are in all mortal things? Why should we be at so much pains to draw you into this paradise, where, as there is a perpetual spring, so all joy flourishes without the least sense of grief to spoil its pleasures? If you would have us to account you men, we cannot but expect you should entertain this happiness; unless you can either disbelieve it, or prove it falls so short of this description that it is not worth the price you must give for it. But how unable you will be to do the former shall appear presently, when I have told you further, how far short this description is of the incomparable excellency of this life.

II.

For this word ETERNAL added to it may well denote the LIFE we speak of to be without any intermission, as well as without any intermixture. As there is no contrary sense of grief in that happy state, so there is no insensibleness of joy. The blessed soul will never cease to feel its own pleasures, because, as there is no *night* in that heavenly country, so there is no *sleep;* in which we can scarce be said to live. The life we shall lead there will be one continued act of knowing, loving,

rejoicing, praising and obeying God; and there will be no void spaces wherein we shall do nothing, or wherein we shall do something else. We cannot conceive how any drowsiness should creep upon us, or heaviness oppress our spirits; and as for other actions besides those now named, what should there be, since all evil is banished, all sin shut out of that paradise?

As for all good works, there will be none of those wherein we are now employed, to exercise our obedience; as not befitting the nobleness of that state, wherein neither we nor others shall be in any need of those things, which now call for our charity to them, or justice to ourselves. What shall works of mercy do in that world, where there is no misery? How shall we visit the sick, where immortality and incorruption provides for a continual health? What hospitality shall we use there, where no poor inhabit, nor strangers come? How shall we clothe the naked, where they are invested with a robe of the purest and most unspotted light? What enemies shall we study to reconcile, where universal friendship reigns? What differences shall we compose, where all live in unity and harmonious love? And if these works of mercy shall be useless, surely then all works of necessity, as they are termed, will be superfluous. There will be no meat, no drink, no apparel or habitation to be cared for, where there is no hunger, thirst, and cold, or such-like wants, which now continually pinch us. The only work will be, to think of God, to love him whose love will appear so wonderful, to rejoice in him, to reckon up his benefits, to thank him for them, to perform him such services as are suitable to the dignity of that condition, to love all the blessed society, who will contribute all they can to each other's happiness. And how incomparably great will that happiness be, when we shall have no other employment but to be happy!

There are two great defects (as a famous divine of our own hath observed) which spoil the entireness of all our delights here, but will find no place in the enjoyments of that happy state. For (1) all the capacities we have now are so narrow and weak, that we cannot long bear any high pleasure: but we are soon satiated with it, and are fain, even for our own ease, to lay it aside, and seek some new delight. This makes our best contentments not to be pure and sincere, without the mixture of some dregs; for of other this fleshly state will not

admit. And besides this, (2) while we study the satisfaction of one capacity, another must be content to go without the pleasure that it desires. They cannot all be gratified together, but the rest must wait till one hath done. And, which is worse, while we fulfil the desires of the lower faculties, the nobler commonly are deprived of their satisfaction. They that are given to their appetite, and are great purveyors for the grosser senses of the body, not only defraud the mind, but even the purer senses, (the eye and the ear,) which are the great gates of wisdom, of their most delightful enjoyments. Nay, such is the imperfection of this state, that the mind itself cannot earnestly fix in one sort of studies, but commonly it is rendered thereby very unapt to reap the delight that other parts of knowledge afford. We have seen deep contemplators in several sciences prove too unskilful in matters of common prudence: and others strangely quick in worldly business, to which they have bent their minds, who have been extreme inapprehensive of divine mysteries. But in the life to come it will be quite otherwise; for our capacities, as I have discoursed in the foregoing chapters, will be there mightily improved; and so enlarged and widened, that we shall be in no danger to take a surfeit of the fullest enjoyments that can present themselves unto us. And such will be the friendly agreement and sweet harmony between the capacities and desires of every faculty there, that the satisfaction of one can no way turn to the prejudice of any other; but rather further and set forward its true delight and contentment. For then, the more we know the more we shall love; and the more we love, the more we shall know how good God is. And this we shall do without any weariness, which now forces us to break off our sweetest enjoyments, because then we shall not spend, but rather improve ourselves by exercise and motion.

Which makes another considerable difference between this state and that which we expect. All our pleasures here, as you may clearly discern from what hath been said, consisting in a vehement motion, which is very transient, and quickly slips away; we must rest a while before we can renew it, and begin the motion again. The duration of the present is short; but there are long pauses made before another succeeds. For no man can always eat and drink, or every moment enjoy any

other delight; much less can he always attend to what he enjoys, though the attention is that which makes the delight. But now, quite contrary, this pleasure that flows from the vision of God is of such a nature that it is always felt and enjoyed. For being firm and steady, fixed and unchangeable, like God himself, it is not received by piecemeal and at certain seasons, as our pleasures here are, but is full and all together, without any space between to disjoin its parts. Which makes those happy souls live in one continued complete happiness and joy, which doth not pass away, but still remains. They can always love him, always praise him, always feel a sense of his goodness trickling down their hearts, and filling them with ineffable joys without any ceasing.

Who would not then by a short course of piety here, which must be oft interrupted by sleep and other necessary occasions, (and it is well if not by many failings,) run towards this never-discontinued life of happiness in the other world? Who would not wish and strive to enjoy such a good as will never suffer him to be out of enjoyment? None sure, but they who, though they cannot always eat and drink and take their pleasure, yet have their hearts so sunk into such delights, that they cannot receive any taste of these celestial entertainments. Do but spend a serious and steadfast thought upon them, do but give yourselves a true gust of them, and you will sooner cease to eat and drink, than to hunger and thirst after them.

III.

For this word ETERNAL, you will soon see, in the most obvious acception of it, denotes the perpetuity and everlasting duration of this uninterrupted and unintermitted LIFE, or state of highest happiness. If we should suppose it to be but of a short continuance, yet such is the pleasure of it, I have shown you, so satisfying are its joys, that any man of sense would choose rather to spend seventy or eighty years there, than to pass them in this miserable world. Nay, one day of that life is better than a thousand of ours: and much rather should we wish to have the meanest place in those celestial mansions than the greatest preferments on this earth. But besides that it is so transcendently sweet and delicious, you

must now consider, that this life knows no term nor period, but lasts as long as him that is the Author of it. "He never began to be the Lord and to be good, (as Clemens Alex. concludes his fifth Book,) being alway what he is: οὐδὲ μὴν παύσεταί ποτε ἀγαθοποιῶν, nor will he ever cease to do good, though he bring all things to an end." Still holy souls will enjoy the sweet fruits of his love, when all things here wither and perish. He is the Eternal, God blessed for ever, from everlasting to everlasting, and changes not. And such will the state of happiness be to which our Lord will bring his servants: to *a crown of glory that fadeth not away*[s]; to *a building of God not made with hands, eternal in the heavens*[t]; to *a kingdom that cannot be shaken*[u]; to a light that is never sullied with any cloud, and can never be put out; to a splendour and glory that is neither eclipsed nor ever impaired; for it is the glory of God, the enjoyment of his eternal brightness: which as it is not broken by sleep, nor interrupted for a time by any of our earthly employments, so much less shall it break off by death, and cease to be for ever.

This is the very crown, as I said at the beginning, and the perfection of the happiness we expect. This makes it to be absolute bliss; because it wants not that continuance which all our enjoyments here desire, but still complain they cannot have. Which some anciently thought they saw most lively represented in the history of the creation of the world: where there is a constant mention, as the Hebrews observe[w], of the *evening and the morning* making one day, till the whole six days' work was ended. *The evening and the morning were the first day*, saith the text[x]: *and the evening and the morning were the second day*[y]. And so you read of all the other six, till you come to the seventh: wherein *God ended the work which he had made, and rested on the seventh day from all his work which he had made*[z]. But it is not said here, as it is in the conclusion of all the former days, that *the evening and the morning were the seventh day*. And therefore they looked upon the six days as a calendar of the several ages of this world, in which there is a continual vicissitude of day and

[s] 1 Pet. v. 4. [t] 2 Cor. v. 1. [u] Heb. xii. 28. [w] Pirke R. Eliezer, c. 18. [p. 40.] [x] Gen. i. 5. [y] Verse 8. [z] ii. 2.

night, of light and darkness, pleasure and grief, labour and rest, and one generation goes that another may come, till all have an end. But the seventh day, in which they found no mention of evening and morning, they took to be an emblem of that happy Sabbath and perfect repose we shall have in the other life; when, as Origen speaks[a], "we have done all our work faithfully, and left nothing undone." After this, says he, follows "the day of God's sabbath and rest, ἐν ᾗ ἑωρτάσουσιν ἅμα τῷ Θεῷ, &c. in which all pious souls, that have finished their work as God did his, ascending up to the spectacle above, and the general assembly of the just and blessed, shall feast together with God, and keep his everlasting Sabbath of joy and gladness and peace, without any succeeding sadness and sorrow, or any conclusion of their happy enjoyments."

Of which also the happy condition of the Hebrews, after they came out of their Egyptian bondage, was some kind of figure: for it is called by the name of a *Sabbath* or *rest* which God gave them from their hard labours; and when they come thither, they are said to come to their rest. In like manner the apostle, speaking of the Christian happiness, calls it by the same name, and proves that there still remains another *rest for the people of God*[b]. And the Spirit itself saith, *Blessed are the dead which die in the Lord, that they may rest from their labours*[c].

There is nothing we can enjoy in this life, but, besides that it is short, we must attain that short enjoyment by much labour. We must not have it with perfect ease, but with toil and pains and the sweat of our brows. Or if it come at a cheaper rate, yet it will stand us in a great many thoughts, and be paid for with much care and solicitude afterward to preserve our contentments; which else will be in danger to be lost, and leave us the more miserable. There will be many also that envy to us our happiness: and others perhaps that will endeavour to oppress us and deprive us of it. And if we can escape all these troubles, yet we must have a sore conflict with ourselves and our spiritual enemies; which will put us to great pains to keep ourselves from being corrupted with the delights of this world, or poisoned and infected with the evil examples that are round

[a] L. vi. contra Cels. p. 317. [§. 61. ed. Ben. tom. i. p. 679 C.]

[b] Heb. iv. 9.

[c] Rev. xiv. 13.

about us. Therefore this present time may well be called the time of our labours: after all which there is nothing we have got but must also have an end, and we shall be forced quickly to take our leave of it.

But now, in that joyful Sabbath that is to succeed, we shall rest from all these labours, and be at no more pains to attain or keep our happiness. There will be no danger, as I have said, of our being despoiled of it. No serpent can creep into that Paradise to tempt and allure us from that great felicity: nor shall we be in any danger from our own flesh; nor find ourselves in a world where there will be any thing to excite our desires but what we may freely take the fullest satisfaction in. By which, and all the rest that hath been discoursed, you may clearly see, there can be nothing wanting to complete the happiness of that state, but only the never-ceasing duration or continuance of it. Now in this, as was said at first, the rest we expect in the other world differs from that which God promised the Hebrews in the land of Canaan. For, by virtue of Moses his law, they had a title only to a *long life* in that fruitful country: in opposition to which, as well as to our short life here, the Christian rest is called an *everlasting life, an inheritance immortal* (because incorruptible) *and undefiled, and that fadeth not away, reserved in heaven for us*[d]. So our Lord himself calls it a great number of times in one discourse he had with the stupid Jews[e], where he exhorts them to labour not so much *for the meat that perisheth*, as *for the meat that endureth to everlasting life, which the Son of man came to give them*[f]. For *this is the will*, he tells them, *of him that sent him, that every one which seeth the Son, and believeth on him, may have everlasting life*[g]. And because they were still sottishly regardless of what he said, he affirms it again with the most vehement asseverations: *Verily, verily, I say unto you, He that believeth on me hath everlasting life:* and *He that eateth of this bread shall live for ever*[h]: which is repeated again in sundry other places of the same chapter.

And I must tell you, for your more ample satisfaction, that our Saviour hath taken care to deliver this doctrine to us in such words as can have no other sense or meaning. The word

[d] 1 Pet. i. 4. [e] John vi. [f] Ver. 27. [g] Ver. 40. [h] Ver. 47, 58.

for ever or *everlasting*, in the old law, sometime signifies only the duration of several years, or a long compass of time, which at last might have an end. As the Hebrew servant, who had sold himself for six years, if, when they were at an end, he chose not to go free, he was *to serve his master for ever*[i]; that is, till the jubilee, if his master lived so long, and he were not redeemed nor released. And there are many ordinances of Moses, not now to be enumerated, which are said to be *everlasting*, because they were to continue till the coming of Christ. Now, lest any one should imagine that the life our Saviour speaks of shall be *everlasting* only in the same sense, a very long continued happiness, (several ages suppose,) which in conclusion might determine and come to an end, he hath prevented such thoughts, by using other words besides this of *everlasting life*, that we may be assured it signifies more in the gospel than it did under the law, that is, an endless bliss. For (1) he not only tells the Jews in the forenamed chapter[k], that he was the *bread*, of which if a man did eat he should *not die;* but that *whosoever liveth* (that is, every living man) *and believeth in him shall never die*[l]: which is as much as to say, he will give us a life without any death. And further (2) he says, that whosoever *keeps his saying* shall *never see death*[m]: which, if it signify any thing distinct from the former, must denote that he shall never be in any danger of death, or come near it; which, in the next words, is called *tasting death*[n]. How can this be, say the Jews, since *Abraham and the prophets are dead; and thou sayest, If a man keep my saying, he shall never taste of death?* That is the phrase wherein our Saviour's passion is expressed, who *tasted death* (i. e. lay in the grave a while) *for every man*[o]: and therefore may signify here that our Saviour's faithful disciples, after he hath given them everlasting life, shall not die at all; no, not for the space of three days, though afterward they might rise again. But I have taken notice of one expression fuller than this; for he doth not only say, that they *shall not* die nor taste of death, but (3) that they *cannot* die any more. *οὔτε γὰρ ἀποθανεῖν ἔτι δύνανται*[p]. There is no possibility, after

[i] Exod. xxi. 6. [k] John vi. 50. [l] xi. 26. [m] viii. 51.
[n] Ver. 52. [o] Heb. ii. 9. [p] Luke xx. 36.

they have attained that life, that they should die again, *for they are equal to the angels, and are the children of God,* being, by the resurrection, begotten to an immortal life. Hence it is that the apostle calls this happy state by the name of *ἀθανασία, immortality*[q], and *ἀφθαρσία, incorruption*[r], and saith that our bodies shall be *raised in incorruption*[s], and *put on immortality*[t], and *bear the image of the heavenly Adam*[u], i. e. of our Lord now he is in glory, who, we know, dies no more. Which all signify, the body as well as the soul shall enjoy such a solid state of happiness as cannot moulder or be dissolved, but will remain firm and durable like the Author of it, by whom *death shall be swallowed up in victory*[x], i. e. be so perfectly conquered, that it shall never recover the least power any more.

Innumerable ages shall never put a period to this *eternal life;* but after they are all passed, the whole man shall be as fresh and beautiful, without any declension or sign of decay, as if it were but newly risen, and had just then put on its purest robes of glorious light. There will be as full a good, I mean, and as great a strength to enjoy it, and as perfect a liking also of it, after millions of ages are spent in the heavenly mansions as there was at the very first entrance into them. Death being destroyed by him who is the Resurrection and the Life, and who dieth no more, an immortal soul shall inhabit an immortal body, and they shall *be for ever with the Lord:* where they shall be for ever employed in those happy exercises before mentioned; which will for ever be to be done again. In the doing of them there will be infinite pleasure; and in the repetition of them there will be no disrelish, but an infinite increase of pleasure. As they always know, so they shall always be knowing more. For new beauties, we may well think, will discover themselves in an infinite object; and this will excite a fresh love, and that a more vigorous joy: and so for ever round again there will be knowing, loving, and rejoicing more and more without any end.

It is but a little that can be said of eternity, though we should speak of it to the end of time. Nay, in *eternity* itself,

[q] 2 Tim. i. 10. [r] Rom. ii. 7. [s] 1 Cor. xv. 42. [t] Ver. 53. [u] Ver. 49. [x] Ver. 54.

we shall not be able to come to the end of it in our thoughts no more than in our being, because it hath none. We can never know it all, because it is still to come. And therefore how little of it will this leaf of paper contain? or, should we write never so much, how shall we be able now to reach the description of a thing so sublime? Thankful acclamations to the goodness of our Saviour for bringing life and immortality to light, and serious admirations at the amazing greatness of what we know of it, will be far more acceptable, as well as more easy, than a long discourse about it. And therefore I shall end this chapter with my wishes, that this blessedness I am speaking of may not seem small in our eyes because we can relate so little of it; but rather appear the greater and the more desirable, because we see it is beyond our present understanding. Though this vast circle of eternity cannot be measured by our thoughts, that makes it but so much the more excellent than our span of time. And though this *life* comprehend such pleasures as we cannot now enjoy, that doth but exalt it above the poor pleasures of this present life, which we can first enjoy and then contemn. We are not able, it is true, to conceive, nor can it enter into our hearts, what God hath in store for those that love him; but this should only excite our longings to conceive it, and make us sigh, and say, when we think of enjoying God himself, and of an eternal enjoyment of him,—

O the fulness of God! O the infiniteness of him that is the Life of this *life!* who can tell what thou art, O most blessed for ever; by whom all things were made, and who art all that can possibly be? What comforts shine from the brightness of thy face! How joyful wilt thou make us with the light of thy countenance when we shall see thee as thou art! It will put greater gladness into our hearts than if all the glory of the world should smile upon us.

But what eye can be strong enough to behold so great a splendour? what excellent creatures must they be made who shall be capable to *see God!* It casts us into a trance when we do but think of being eternally beloved of thee. O what will it do to feel ourselves ever, ever the objects of thy infinite love! The beauteous frame of the heavens is exceeding admirable in our eyes. O what a goodly world is this, in which

thou sufferest thine enemies to live! What a glorious torch is the sun, which thou hast lighted to shine on the unjust as well as on the just! Who then can hope to know, till he sees, what the pleasures are which thou hast prepared for thy friends? What a glorious light shall shine from thy presence upon the face of those that love thee! Their hearts now cannot hold the smallest glimpse of that which shall for ever bless and ravish them with its joys. But how can we hope to see it unless thou wilt raise us above ourselves, and make us no longer men of this world, but children of the resurrection, and equal to the holy angels? We believe, and rejoice to think, that thou wilt account us worthy to obtain that world and the resurrection of the dead. It is the greatest pleasure we have here, to hope we shall enjoy all the happiness of which we now discourse; nay, far more, infinitely more than can be conceived.

"For how great will that happiness be, where we shall neither feel any evil nor want any good, where all our work will be the praises of God, who shall be all in all, where no sloth shall make us cease to praise him, nor any necessity call us to other employment!...There will be true glory indeed, where no man shall be praised either by the error or the flattery of him that praiseth. True honour that will be, which shall be denied to no worthy person, nor given to any unworthy. Nay, the unworthy shall not so much as seek it there, where none are permitted to come but such as are worthy. True peace is there, where nothing shall fall cross to our desires, either from ourselves or any other. There he who gave virtue will be its reward; having promised that he himself, than which nothing can be greater, nothing better, will be the portion of it. What else shall we understand by those words, *I will be their God, and they my people*, but that, I will be their satisfaction, I will be all that every one can honestly desire, both life, and health, and sustenance, and riches, and glory, and honour, and all good? For so we read, that *God will be all in all.* He will be the end of our desires, who will be seen without end, and loved without loathing, and praised without weariness. This will be the office, this will be the inclination, this will be the work of all in that eternal life, which is common to all. There we shall sing the mercies of the Lord for ever." "There we shall

keep that truly greatest sabbath, which hath no evening. There we shall rest from labour and see, we shall see and love, we shall love and praise. Behold what will be in the end without end! For what else is our end, but to come to the kingdom which hath no end[y]?" Amen.

CHAP. V.

Of the certainty of this Eternal Life, whose excellency is a little further illustrated out of the Holy Scriptures.

When I reflect upon the foregoing meditations concerning the *life* to come, and the *eternity* of it, I begin to think I have wronged it much by so poor and dull a description of so great a good; and by endeavouring to draw that into a few particular considerations which hath in it innumerable perfections. It had been more becoming our ignorance, perhaps, to have admired its fulness, than to undertake to search how full it is. Alas, what shallow brains have we to contain a wide and deep ocean! what weak eyes, to look steadfastly upon the most glorious light of heaven! How much too short and narrow are our thoughts, to compass an eternal duration! When we have done all we can, the best way I think to our satisfaction will be, to have recourse to a passage from the mouth of God himself, wherein we must rest ourselves contented. It is in the Revelations, xxi. 7, where St. John was told by him who *sat upon the throne*[z], that *he that overcometh shall inherit all things, and I will be his God, and he shall be my son.*

A most marvellously large conveyance is here delivered to us from him who hath all that can be in his possession. The great Lord of heaven and earth makes us a grant in these words so exceeding full, that we cannot desire it should run in more comprehensive terms. For by this promise (1) he makes over to us *all things.* Heart cannot wish more to make us completely happy than he settles upon us; for there is no good thing that he will withhold from those that steadfastly

[y] August. de Civ. Dei, cap. ult. [tom. vii. coll. 699, 702.] [z] Rev. xxi. 5.

adhere to him. And observe (2) the tenure wherein we shall hold these vast and large possessions, which is as an *inheritance.* We have an everlasting perpetual estate made us in *all things.* The terms of this writing are such as if it had run in these words, 'by an eternal indefeasible right he shall possess all blessings.' For inheritances, it is well known, among the Hebrews never failed, nor went out of the family. They could not be so alienated by sale or gift, but they returned in the year of jubilee to their first owner or his posterity. Which makes the word *inherit*, in the holy language, to signify the enjoyment of a purchase or possession out of which the inheritor can never be thrown, and which he cannot quit, but shall remain settled in him to perpetuity. This St. Paul calls *the riches of the glory of his inheritance* [a], to signify, that our celestial patrimony is not only exceeding large and firmly settled on us, but also most noble, and brings along with it everlasting honour and renown. Which is more fully explained, you may note (3), and the reason of it given, in the next words, *I will be God to him:* I will confer, that is, such benefits on him as are fit for the bounty of the omnipotent Goodness to bestow. Look what he was to Abraham in this world, (to whom he promised *to be a God* [b]), that he will be to us eternally: *In blessing he will bless us, and be our exceeding great reward.*

The word Θεὸς, *God,* answers to the Hebrew word *Elohim;* which doth not respect the *essence* of the Almighty, but his *providence,* as Genebrard among others hath well observed [c]: and signifies as much as the judge, the moderator and governor of the world, (from whence it is that judges, magistrates and rulers are called by this name,) to whom it belongs to give rewards and punishments. And accordingly the Hebrew writers observe, that it is never said the Lord will be *the God* of any persons but when he expresses some singularly great kindness, and stands in a special relation of love to them. In particular Abarbinel notes (upon Deut. vi.) that he is never called *the God of Israel,* till he had brought them in a wonderful manner out of the land of Egypt, the house of bondage. I find, indeed, that he promised to be *their God* before, when he

[a] Eph. i. 18. [b] Gen. xvii. 7. [c] In Psal. xiv. 1. [p. 72.]

told Abraham that he would give him and his seed the land of Canaan *for an everlasting possession* [d]. But he did not begin to be so till he began to lead them thither; and in token of their being his, they had kept the passover, and received his law from mount Sinai. Before this Moses says, *We were bondmen in Egypt, and the Lord brought us out with a mighty hand* [e]. *And the Lord showed signs and wonders great and sore upon Egypt, upon Pharaoh and upon all his household, before our eyes* [f]. He doth not say in all these words אֱלֹהֵינוּ, *the Lord our God:* but only, *the Lord brought us out*, and, *the Lord showed:* because he speaks of the time before the giving of the law, which was the greatest kindness he did them after they came out of Egypt. But as soon as he had made mention of that, (says Abarbinel), in the very next words [g], he alters his style, and tells them, *The Lord commanded us to do all these statutes, to fear the Lord our God, for our good always*, &c. And, *It shall be our righteousness, if we observe to do all these commandments, before the Lord our God, as he hath commanded us* [h]. And so he speaks, *When the Lord thy God shall bring thee into the land* [i], &c.: and, *When the Lord thy God shall deliver them before thee* [j], &c.: and, *Thou art a holy people to the Lord thy God; The Lord thy God hath chosen thee to be a special people to himself* [k], &c. For from the time of his appearing on mount Sinai and so forward, (says that learned Hebrew writer), "he was our God, because then we took upon us his divinity."

And I think I may as truly observe, that till the resurrection of our Lord from the dead, (which completed that ἔξοδος, *departure*, which Moses and Elias discoursed with him about, and said he should *accomplish at Jerusalem* [l]), we never read that the Father Almighty is called *the God* of those who believe in his Son Jesus. Then he demonstrated beyond all contradiction that he was their Saviour and mighty Deliverer, who would rescue them from the bondage of corruption, the fear of death, the power of the grave, and give them immortal life. And therefore then he bids Mary go and tell his disciples, whom he calls *brethren*, and say to them, *I ascend to my Father and*

[d] Gen. xvii. 8. [e] Deut. vi. 21. [f] Ver. 22. [g] Ver. 24.
[h] Ver. 25. [i] vii. 1. [j] Ver. 2. [k] Ver. 6. [l] Luke ix. 31.

your Father, and to my God and your God[m]. This is the first time he is called *their God:* but ever after there is no language more common. For as St. Peter and St. Paul call him *the God of our Lord Jesus Christ*[n], (I suppose because he had raised him from the dead, and highly glorified him for his obedient suffering of death;) so they address themselves to him as particularly related to them, and ready to bestow upon them the like blessedness, saying, *I thank my God always*, &c.: *My God shall supply all your need: We rejoice before our God*, &c., as you may read in many places of St. Paul's Epistles[o]. Which shows that this promise in the Revelation, (made after our Saviour's ascension), of being *the God* of those who overcome, includes in it the bestowing on us the most excellent benefits: because he will be our God in a more excellent manner than he ever was yet to men; such a God as he was to our blessed Lord himself. He will prefer us to live with him in great splendour and glory. He will give us an inheritance in a better country, which is an heavenly; where all delights flow, and never cease to spring up to those happy souls, who shall enjoy the eternal fruits of his greatest love.

For so he adds, (4) *and he shall be to me a Son.* A son, you know, expects the inheritance of his father; because to him it properly belongs, and upon him it descends: and therefore to be to God *a son*, is to be made like him, and to live with him in that very happiness and bliss which he enjoys. So St. Paul expresses it, he shall be *an heir of God, a coheir with Jesus*[p], who as the Son of God inherits his glory. He shall participate, that is, with God in his everlasting life, kingdom, honour and joy: which what it is we are not able to tell, no more than we can comprehend what his majesty is who possesses heaven and earth, and is infinite in all perfections. But we have the greatest reason that can be to expect so great a bliss, because we know that God *loves his Son Jesus, and hath given all things into his hand*[q]. We are sure that God *hath made him most blessed for ever; he hath made him exceeding glad with his countenance. Honour and majesty hath he laid upon him, and his glory is great in his salvation*[r].

[m] John xx. 17.
[n] Eph. i. 3, 17. 1 Pet. i. 3.
[o] Rom. i. 8. 1 Cor. i. 4. Philippians iv. 19. 1 Thess. iii. 9.
[p] Rom. viii. 17.
[q] John iii. 35.
[r] Ps. xxi. 5, 6.

Now it is most evident, you may again observe, (5) that the general intendment of this promise is, to put us in hope of being made like to Christ our elder brother. For he is not ashamed to call us by that name. And this being his great prerogative, that he is *heir of all things;* when the Father of mercy assures us that we shall *inherit all things,* it is as much as to say, we shall share with Christ in his large possessions. It is easy to note, how the holy gospel describes our expected felicity in the same terms wherein it speaks of that which Christ our Head enjoys: with whom St. Paul says we shall *appear in glory,* and *reign with him,* and have a *glorious body* like his, and in order to it be *caught up in the clouds*[s]; which was the manner of his ascension into heaven[t]. And accordingly here God promises to him that overcomes that he shall *inherit all things;* in conformity still with our Saviour, *whom he hath appointed heir of all things*[u].

I cannot say there is any allusion in these words to the Olympic rewards, given to the conquerors in those combats: but so it is, that they who overcame there were accounted *ἰσόθεοι,* 'equal to their gods;' that is, their heroes or deified men: and therefore had statues erected to their honour, and an annual pension settled on them for their more noble maintenance[x]. But what was this to the real divine honour and glory which God will give to victorious souls? to whom he promises, not a small pension or annuity, but an *inheritance,* and that of *all things:* i. e. to shine in the glory of our blessed Saviour; who is King of kings and Lord of lords, and can prefer all his subjects to such a greatness, that they shall be more like gods than men. So St. Greg. Nazianzen often speaks, that "we shall be made gods in the other world, by him that was made man for us in this[y]." It is hard to tell what Heraclitus meant by that speech recorded in Clemens Alexandrinus[z], *ἄνθρωποι θεοὶ, θεοὶ ἄνθρωποι·* 'men are gods, gods are men.' But it is verified in the Christian religion, which reveals a divine state, to which we shall ascend when we leave the earth, by him who came down from heaven into a vile condition that he might promote us thither.

[s] 1 Thess. iv. 17.
[t] Acts i. 9.
[u] Heb. i. 2.
[x] Fabri Agonist. L. ii. c. 11. 16, 17.
[y] Orat. xxxvi. p. 592. [ed. Ben. orat. 30. § 14. tom. i. p. 550 C.]
[z] L. iii. Pædag. c. 1. [p. 251.]

Let us study then these words very hard, and think often what it is to have *all things* that the love of the Almighty will bestow, when, in the most eminent sense, and in another world, he shall become *our God:* and what it is to have an estate in him that can never be cut off, but remains as firm as the throne on which he sat when he spake these words. And then, if you believe in him, it will fill you with unspeakable joy, (without entering into particular inquiries), to think that you shall be so happy as to be his *sons* and *heirs*, who want nothing that can be desired, or he can give. And indeed these other words, *eternal life*, wherein God's gracious promise commonly runs, are of the same import and force with those now mentioned. All that we hope for is contained in them. As (1) *pardon of sin:* without which we cannot take one step toward so great a bliss. For death, the fruit and punishment of sin, will still remain, unless sin be pardoned: and then what hope can we have of life, much less of eternal life? which is therefore perhaps called by the name of *righteousness*[a], because it includes our perfect justification and absolution from the guilt of sin, without which we could not attain it. And (2) it supposes the *adoption of sons:* which is begun in this life, but not perfected till the next; when we shall be made the children of God by receiving a new life from him at the resurrection of the dead. And (3) the *redemption of the body* is another blessing included in it. For, being raised again, it will be freed from its present weaknesses, alterations, and pains, to which it is obnoxious, and stand in need of not so much as food and raiment: and therefore the time when he will bestow it is called the *day of our redemption*[b]. To which must be added, (4) the *carrying of it up to heaven, to meet the Lord:* for, being raised a spiritual body, it will not be fit for this world, but for the other. Where (5) we shall *rest with him* in the celestial inheritance, and enjoy all the happiness it affords: for *life*, you have heard, signifies all good things. And (lastly) the *perpetuity* of them is plainly expressed in the word *eternal:* which makes the happiness of this heavenly *life* appear so exceeding great, that our present life, compared to it, is (as Censorinus says of time in regard of eternity) no more than a winter's day.

[a] Gal. v. 5. [b] Eph. iv. 30.

Let this then suffice us to know, that we shall have a perfect enjoyment of all the good we are capable to receive, when we are made greater than we are, by the change that shall be wrought in us at our departure hence, and at the resurrection of the dead. And let our pains be more employed to know the truth and certainty of this, than to know what the good is we shall enjoy; which will be best known by possessing it.

And herein now we may admire the goodness of God, and see how liberal he is of his bounties, where we are capable to receive them. Though he hath said little to make us particularly understand the *life* of the next world, yet he hath said very much to assure us that there is such an happy life. Where we can understand and comprehend his mind, there he fully expresses himself; and therefore where he is more silent, it is (no doubt) because, should he speak of such matters, we cannot understand him. We are able to conceive any thing that he shall declare for the reason of our hope, and the ground of our faith; and it highly concerns us to be very well satisfied in the foundation of such expectations in a future world. And therefore herein our gracious God hath not been sparing to reveal himself; but hath granted us the strongest evidences for our claim to such an *inheritance*. Which makes me conclude, that if we were as capable to receive instruction concerning the *inheritance* itself, and to have a terrier (as I may call it) or particular description of that heavenly country, of the manner of their life, and all the fruits growing there, delivered to us; he that hath been so large in the assurances he hath given us would not have denied us also this satisfaction. Well therefore it is for us that this is the only reason why we want it, and know not *what we shall be;* because we cannot, till we be changed, be made partakers of so great a knowledge. And well is it for us that we have also so good a cause to think that this is the only reason; because God hath manifested himself so fully to us in other things that belong to our happiness, by giving us the most firm grounds whereon to build our future hopes.

This is the thing which this present treatise chiefly intends; to show, as God himself speaks concerning the promises of the New Jerusalem, that *these words are faithful and true*[c].

[c] Rev. xxi. 5.

There is no cozenage or deceit in these promises, no fraud or collusion in the drawing them up; nor any alteration in God's mind since they were made, and he hath set such seals to them. But I may say, as he there doth to St. John, who it is possible might doubt of what the angel had shown him, *Behold*, (or, as Andreas Cæsariensis reads it [d],) Ἰδοὺ, ἰδοὺ, *Behold, behold, I make all things new.* See here and observe; I myself, who sit upon my throne, assure thee of the certainty of these visions: if thou wilt take my word, I here pass it to thee, that I will fulfil all these promises. Such, I say, is the unquestionable credit of the *words of eternal life.* God himself hath spoken them; he hath bid us believe them; yea, he hath said, we must account him a liar if we do not rely upon them. *For this*, saith St. John, *is the record, that God hath given us eternal life, and this life is in his Son.*

Before I come to a particular examination of all that hath been said and done to verify this, let me note these two things. First, That the apostle saith, we have a *record* of this truth; which is attested from the mouth of several infallible witnesses, who have deposed what they saw and heard about it, to the satisfaction of all those that will consider their testimony. There being such a *record*, that is, that *Jesus is the Son of God*, we have no reason to doubt of the *eternal life* he promises: but upon the very same grounds that we believe the one, we ought to believe the other. If the *Father*, the *Word*, the *Holy Ghost*, and all other witnesses, have proved the former by undeniable testimonies; then at the same time they proved this also, that we shall *live by him.*

For (1) it is evident that if Jesus was the *Son of God*, sent by him in a special manner into the world to act in his stead, we are to believe all that he says of himself, or that others, by his commission and authority, have declared him to be. Now, if we look into his gospel, we shall find that he most earnestly affirms himself to have been *before Abraham was* [e], and to have had a *glory with God before the world was* [f]; and to be so *one with the Father, that the Father was in him, and he in the Father* [g]: and they who were his inspired wit-

[d] [ad calc. Œcum. tom. ii. p. 820 D.] [e] John viii. 58. [f] xvii. 5. [g] x. 30, 38.

nesses, whom he said he would *send as the Father sent him*[h], and who were filled by him with the Holy Ghost, declared him to be God's *Word*, who *in the beginning was with God, and was God*[i]: *the image of the invisible God, the brightness of his glory, and the character of his person; who in the beginning laid the foundation of the earth, and the heavens were the works of his hands*[k]. From all which we may certainly conclude, that he is not only the Son of God in regard of his authority, but by nature; "begotten of him before all worlds, of one substance with the Father." And therefore,

We may be confident (2) that he, being thus nearly related to God, must needs know his mind, and be acquainted with his most secret purposes and resolutions: to which he was so privy, that he says he *was then in heaven*, when he was come down to reveal them to men[l]. So that we may safely look upon the promises he makes us of *eternal life*, as the declarations of God's gracious will and pleasure, which shall undoubtedly be fulfilled. *No man* indeed (as St. John speaks[m]) *hath seen God at any time; the only-begotten Son, which is in the bosom of the Father, he hath declared him.* For who could dive into God's mind, and tell us what was in his thoughts? What man could enter into his breast and see what was in his heart to do for us? None but his only-begotten Son; who, being in his bosom, and privy to his most secret counsels, ἐξηγήσατο, hath *declared* or *expounded* him, i. e. his hidden will and decrees, which else had not been revealed to us. It is the opinion of Maimonides, in several parts of his works[n], that when Moses prayed God to *show him his glory*, he meant his essence, of which he desired to have a distinct conception as it is in itself; such as we have of a man when we have seen his face, and by the image of him remaining in our mind can distinguish him from all other men. But there are others of their learned men who, by his *glory*, understand the rewards he will give the pious, and the prosperity he sometimes bestows on the wicked. Whatsoever it was, God told him he could not comprehend it, but must be content with the sight only of *his*

[h] John xx. 21. [i] i. 1, 2.
[k] Col. i. 15. Heb. i. 3, 10.
[l] John iii. 13.
[m] i. 18.
[n] L. de Fund. Legis, cap. i. n. 10. More Nev. part i. cap. 37, 54, &c. [pp. 55, 87.]

back parts, not of his face[o]: that is, saith Maimonides, with the knowledge of something of his essence; or, as he elsewhere expounds it[p], of his works and attributes; of which he had such an obscure knowledge as we have of a man whose back parts we have seen, but never beheld his face. To be so intimately acquainted with God and his mind as he wished, was the privilege of the Messiah alone, who had the clearest and fullest sight of the glory of the Father, both of his essence and his will, and his gracious intentions towards us: for he is εἰς τὸν κόλπον, *in the bosom* of the Father, and therefore *sees his face*, as the Scripture speaks; and hath not merely some obscure representations of him, like that of a man when he turns his back to us, but a full view of him in all his perfections, of which he himself is the very image. And what he saw, he hath, by God's express will, revealed to us; and discovered those things which eye never beheld, (but were kept secret from the foundation of the world,) concerning the glorious rewards which his love will give to all pious persons. For since I have proved that he is his Son, we cannot imagine that he presumed to say more than he knew, or told us things out of his own mind only, (when he spake of *eternal life*, as he frequently did,) but *what he hath seen and heard, that he testifieth*, as it is John iii. 32.

We cannot believe otherwise (3) when we look upon him as the Son of God, but that he must needs speak the very truth to us. As he could not but know the mind of God, if he was so one with him, so he could not but speak to us according to what he knew of his mind. For as the Father is truth, so is the Son, because he is perfectly the same with the Father. "We worship the Father of truth, and the Son the truth; who are two in person, but one in consent, and agreement, and identity of will," as Origen speaks[q], explaining those words of our Saviour, *I and the Father are one*[r], and *I am the truth*[s]. We may be confident that the words of both are equally faithful and true. So God the Father bade St. John write of his own sayings, as I observed before[t]. And in the same style our Saviour commands him to write of himself, *These things*

[o] Exod. xxxiii. ult.
[p] More Nev. p. i. c. 21. [p. 25.]
[q] L. viii. contra Celsum. [§ 12. tom. i. p. 751 A.]
[r] John x. 30.
[s] xiv. 6.
[t] Rev. xxi. 5.

saith the Amen, the faithful and true witness[u]. John Baptist had said as much before[x]: *He whom God hath sent speaketh the words of God.* To which the words of our Saviour, in another place of that Gospel, perfectly accord[y]: *I have not spoken of myself; but the Father which sent me, he gave me a commandment, what I should say, and what I should speak. And I know that his commandment is Everlasting Life: whatsoever I speak therefore, even as the Father said unto me, so I speak.*

And (4) he hath no less power than he hath truth; but being the Son of God, the heir of all things, can make good his gracious promises, and put us into the possession of the eternal inheritance which we expect as coheirs with him. He was *declared the Son of God with power by his resurrection from the dead*[z]; according to his own prayer just before he offered up himself to God: *Father, the hour is come; glorify thy Son, that thy Son may glorify thee: as thou hast given him power over all flesh, that he should give eternal life to as many as thou hast given him*[a].

And can we think (5) that he will not faithfully execute this trust, and employ his power for the end to which it was given him? He would not then be like his Father, *who keepeth truth for ever:* as he also almost certainly will, being the *same Jesus yesterday, and to-day, and for ever*[b]. For if Moses was faithful in the house of another, wherein he was but a servant, no doubt our Lord, who is *a Son over his own house* or family[c], will not fail to discharge his royal office with all exactness, but manifest himself to be like his name, *the Word of God*[d], *faithful and true*[e].

This *record* concerning him St. John thought so weighty and secure an evidence, that he concludes all good Christians as sure of eternal life as if it were already in their hands. For after he had said here (in the words I am explaining) that God hath *given us*, i. e. made us a promise of, *eternal life*, which *is in his Son*, he adds immediately, (which is the second thing I intended to note,) that *we have* eternal life: which cannot signify less than that we have such a good right

[u] Rev. iii. 14. [x] John iii. 34. [y] xii. 49, 50. [z] Rom. i. 4.
[a] John xvii. 1, 2. [b] Heb. xiii. 8. [c] Heb. iii. 6. [d] Rev. xix. 13.
[e] Ver. 11.

to it that we may account it ours. The reason is, because he that effectually believes in Jesus, *hath him* in whose power it is to give it, and who hath passed his word, many a time, that he will bestow it. So you read ver. 12, *He that hath the Son hath life.* He may be as sure of it as if it were in his present possession; for by faith in Christ he is united to him who is the fountain and well-spring of life and bliss, and stands engaged divers ways to make all the members of his body happy with himself. For *to as many as received him he gave ἐξουσίαν, power,* or *authority, to become the sons of God*[f], who may legally claim the consummation of their adoption in the eternal inheritance. They are, by his grant, unquestionable heirs of it, and have such a strong title to it, that they can never be defeated of it. This heavenly estate is in them, as lawyers speak, though they be not in it. They have an indisputable right, I mean, to it, and may call it theirs, though they be not yet seized of it, and have not taken possession, which in due time none can hinder or debar them of. So the apostle would have the faithful steadfastly believe, (for this was the very end for which he recorded the evidences forementioned,) that *they might know they have eternal life*[g]*:* which he repeats often in his Gospel, as you read John iii. 36, v. 24, vi. 47; where he asserts this in the most earnest manner, and assures them that he spake of this matter out of certain knowledge, *Verily, verily, I say unto you, He that believeth on me hath everlasting life.* He is a most happy man, and may look upon himself as owner of more than all this world is worth: which he can never lose, though he be not yet entered upon this inheritance, because it is in the custody of him who hath all power in heaven and earth, and hath said, as it there follows, *I will raise him up at the last day*[h].

Well then, seeing that these are the things we expect, *to have our sins blotted out when the times of refreshing shall come,* to be made *children of the resurrection,* to be *delivered from the wrath to come,* to have *glorious bodies,* to *reign with Christ,* and to be made *heirs of all things;* and seeing we are said to have this bliss, i. e. to have a certain right to it, if we believe on him, and seeing also that our right is apparent from

[f] John i. 12. [g] Ver. 13. [h] Ver. 54.

the same *records* or *witnesses* whereby it was proved that *Jesus* is the *Son of God:* all that I can apprehend remaining to be done, to give us a fuller certainty of these promises, is to make particular inquiry what every one of those *witnesses*, which testify to Jesus, say to this point, that *God hath given us eternal life*, and *that this life is in his Son*. This is the *record*, St. John saith, i. e. this is the matter of it. Let us examine, if you please, all these six witnesses one after another upon this matter, and see if they do not give the same evidence of it that they have done of the other, and make as infallible proofs that God hath given us this blessing, and that it is in him, as they do that Jesus is the Son of God, and came from him.

There is no way like to this (that I know of) to attain a strong faith and hope of eternal life: which it infinitely concerns us all to make sure, and to have a well grounded persuasion of, both that we may live comfortably in the midst of all troubles; and that we may be able to overcome all temptations; and that we may be willing to die; and, when nothing else will give us the least comfort, we may lift up our heads with unspeakable joy.

For what can deject their hearts whose hope is firmly fixed in heaven? What should make them complain who have for their inheritance everlasting life? Unspeakable, unconceivable are the glories, innumerable are the good things which God hath prepared for those that love him. "As in things visible, the plants, the seeds, the flowers are so numerous that none can count them, nor is it possible to cast up the sum of all the other treasures of the earth; or, as in the sea, the wit of man cannot comprehend the creatures in it, either their number, or their kinds, or their differences, or take the measure of its waters, or of its place; or, as in the air, none can number the birds, or in the heavens tell all the stars: so it is impossible to tell or conceive the riches of Christians in the invisible world; their unmeasurable, their infinite, their incomprehensible riches. For if these creatures are so infinite and incomprehensible by man, how much more he that made and formed them all?

"And therefore it ought to fill every Christian heart with the greater joy and exultation of spirit, because the riches and in-

heritance prepared for them so much surpasses all that can be uttered. And with all diligence and humility should we buckle ourselves to the Christian combat, that we may be partakers of their riches: for the inheritance and the portion of Christians is God himself. They may say, with David, *The Lord is the portion of mine inheritance; my lines are fallen unto me in pleasant places: yea, I have a goodly heritage.* Glory be to him who gives us himself. Glory be to him for ever who mixes his own nature with Christian souls[i]."

"O the ineffable kindness of God, who freely bestows no less than himself upon us! O the ineffable happiness of such souls, who are wholly in joy, and mirth, and peace, as so many kings, and lords, and gods! Behold here thy nobility .... Christianity is no vulgar or contemptible thing. Thou art called to the dignity of a kingdom; not like that of earthly princes, whose glory and riches are corruptible and pass away, but to the kingdom of God, to riches divine and celestial, which never decay: for there blessed souls reign together with the heavenly King, and in the heavenly company ....

"Since such good things therefore are set before us, such glorious promises are made us, such great good will of our Lord is manifested towards us, let us not despise his kindness, nor be slack in our motion towards eternal life; but give up ourselves entirely to the good pleasure of the Lord. And let us call upon him, that, by the power of his divinity, he would redeem us from the dark prison of dishonourable affections, and vindicating his own image and workmanship, cause it to shine most brightly, till our souls be so sound and pure, that we be made worthy of the communion of the Spirit, giving glory to the Father, and to the Son, and to the Holy Ghost for ever. Amen[k]."

[i] Macarius, Hom. xxxiv. [§ 3. apud Galland. tom. vii. p. 125.]
[k] Idem. Hom. xxvii. [§ 4. p. 103.] et xlix. [§ 4, 5. p. 155.]

CHAP. VI.

Concerning the testimony of the Father.

We must begin, as we did before, with the *witnesses in heaven:* the first of which, you know, is the *Father;* who spake three times from heaven by an audible voice, to testify to our Lord Jesus. And if you examine again all that he hath said, you will find both these things recorded in his words, that *he hath given us eternal life*, and that *this life is in his Son.*

I.

The first time that God the *Father* spake from heaven was at our Saviour's baptism; when the heavens were opened, and a voice came from thence, which said, *Thou art my beloved Son, in thee I am well pleased*[l]. In which words there are two things very remarkable, which plainly testify to the truth of those two now mentioned, that *life* is in his Son, and that we shall partake of it.

I. That he calls Jesus his *Son*, and his *beloved* Son. Which, being spoken from heaven in such a glorious manner as the Gospel describes it, must needs signify him to be his *Son* in the most eminent sense, for it was never said to any angel in this sort, *Thou art my Son, my beloved Son.* This declared him to have *the fulness of the Godhead dwelling in him bodily*, to be invested with his own authority and power, and to be that Seed promised who should bless all the world: which is a thing too great for any one to do but for God himself. It was by an audible voice from heaven that the angel of the Lord called to Abraham, to tell him *the Lord had sworn by himself, that in his seed all the nations of the earth should be blessed*[m]. And so now, to show us the seed was come who should be such a great benefactor to mankind, the Lord himself speaks by a voice from heaven, declaring Jesus to be his *Son*, the Author of that universal bliss which he had promised. Which tells us plainly enough that *life* is in him, (which is one of the things that St. John affirms upon this *record:*) for else he would not be such a Son as he now declared him, able to *bless all na-*

[l] Luke iii. 22. [m] Gen. xxii. 15, 16, 18.

tions: who, it is manifest, had him not for their visible leader, as the Israelites had Moses and Joshua to give them a temporal inheritance; and therefore were to have his spiritual divine benediction in another world, where he is *the Author of eternal salvation to all that obey him.*

And lest you should imagine this to be merely a collection of mine own, which I have forced out of these words, I will refer you to our Saviour's own interpretation of them in that speech of his, *For as the Father hath life in himself, so hath he given to the Son to have life in himself*[n]. Here he teaches us to argue that, if he be the *Son* of God, as this voice said he was, then he is by the same voice declared to *have life in himself,* because the Father hath so, whom his *Son,* his only *Son,* doth perfectly resemble. And he teaches us withal, that this is a power communicated to him, as he is the Christ; for he saith the Father *hath given him* to have life in himself, and that (as you read in the next verse) because *he is the Son of man;* that is, the great Person he promised to send of the seed of Abraham. Now we read of no other time when the Father might be said to have *given him* this power, but now, when he owned him for his *Son,* and anointed him, as you shall hear, with the Holy Ghost, to preach the glad tidings of immortal life. Now God the Father *sealed* and authorized him to be the person to whom we must repair for *the meat that endureth to everlasting life*[o]. He declared him now to be *the bread of God,* as he calls himself, *which gives life to the world*[p], the *bread of life*[q], *the living bread*[r], the *manna which came down from heaven,* and nourishes to eternal life: in short, to have all things committed to him, that *whatsoever things the Father doeth, these also,* you may be sure, *the Son doeth likewise*[s]. He doeth them κατὰ τὴν τῆς ἐξουσίας ὁμοτιμίαν, 'after the same equality and perfect likeness of power:' (as Greg. Nazianz.[t] expounds the word ὁμοίως, *likewise,* in this place.) So that we need no more doubt of his ability than we do of God the Father's, to give eternal life to all his followers.

II. And that he will employ his power to make us partakers of it, (which is the other part of the *record* concerning this

[n] John v. 26. [o] vi. 27. [t] Orat. 36. p. 584 D. [ed. Ben. Orat. 30. § 11. tom. i. p. 547 D.]
[p] Ver. 33. [q] Ver. 35.
[r] Ver. 51. [s] v. 19.

eternal life,) is manifest from the next part of this voice of God the Father, which said, *in thee I am well pleased.* He expresses here that he takes a singular delight in this Person, and bears such a dear affection to him, that there is nothing he will deny him. Now that hereby is denoted also his exceeding great love and good-will towards all those that belong to his Son, you may be soon satisfied, by observing that these are the very words wherein God declares his loving-kindness towards his church in the days of Christ[t]. There the Lord calls her חֶפְצִי בָהּ, *Hephzi-bah,* ἡ εὐδοκία μου ἐν αὐτῇ, (as some Greek versions render it,) 'my delight is in her.' That is the reason he himself gives of her name, as it there follows, *for the Lord delighteth in thee:* where the Seventy use the very word in which this voice from heaven is recorded, ὅτι ὁ Κύριος εὐδόκησε, *for the Lord is well pleased in thee.* From whence I think it reasonable to conclude that, the same thing being said of both, God declared his delight in all Christians, and the pleasure he will take in bestowing his benefits on them, when he declared himself to be *well pleased* in this dear Son, whom they acknowledge for their Lord and Master. He tells us, by this voice, that he will be reconciled to us, and, forgetting our ill behaviour towards him, will espouse us to himself (as it follows in the prophet) in the tenderest love, and rejoice to bestow his choicest favours on us.

And that this is no inference merely wrung from these words, or a notion of my own contrivance, you may presently agree, if you consider that thus John Baptist, in all likelihood, understood them. For seeing Jesus, a little after he had baptized him, coming towards him, he cried out, *Behold the Lamb of God, that taketh away the sins of the world*[u]. And again, the next day after this he pointed two of his disciples unto Jesus, and said in part the very same words, *Behold the Lamb of God*[x]. Now what is it to be the *Lamb of God,* but to be a sacrifice of God's own appointment, so pleasing and acceptable to him that it obtains all the ends for which it was offered? And what is it to *take away the sins of the world,* but, by overcoming all the temptations to which Adam yielded, and

[t] Isa. lxii. 4. [u] John i. 29. [x] Ver. 36.

being obedient even to the death, to restore us unto a right of entering paradise again, from whence our sins have excluded us? to open the kingdom of heaven to all believers, by removing, as I may say, the flaming sword; that is, taking those obstacles out of the way that debarred us from approaching to the tree of life? This, no doubt, is the complete meaning of *carrying away the sins of mankind*, which are the only impediments that hinder us from the enjoyment of immortality: and therefore being gone, we have free leave to return to it. Now John the Baptist had no other ground that we can find for this conclusion, but only this voice, which I proved he heard from the Father, concerning the pleasure which he took in his Son. Whereby he did as good as affirm, that his delight in Jesus, *who delighted to do his will*, was so great, that he would restore us into his ancient love for his sake, and be perfectly appeased and reconciled to us by his means; so that we should be no longer banished from his blessed presence, but by the forgiveness of our sins be placed again in that happy state from which we had stood so long exiled.

II.

Now from hence let us pass to take a review of the second testimony of the Father to him; where we shall find the same thing recorded again, that *he hath given us eternal life*, and that *this life is in his Son*, i. e. it is in his power to give it. The places are well known where we may meet with it, in Matt. xvii. and other evangelists, which tell us that Jesus, being on an high mountain with three of his disciples, who were wont to attend him on particular occasions, was transfigured before them, and a voice came from heaven, which said, *This is my beloved Son, in whom I am well pleased; hear him*. It would be too tedious to speak of this mountain, and his transfiguration there, in such a glorious manner that his *countenance shone as the sun*: though this may reasonably be thought (as I showed in the former treatise) to be a representation of his ascension into heaven, where he shines at the right hand of the Father, and is the *Lord of glory*. And therefore I shall only observe two things: first, the words now added to the voice formerly delivered: secondly, the manner wherein they were spoken in the audience of those apostles.

I. As for the words now added in this second voice to those of the first, (wherein he had declared him, as he doth here again, his beloved Son, in whom he delighted,) they are these, *Hear ye him.* Which are the very words that Moses spake to the children of Israel when he prophesied of the Messiah, and said, *unto him ye shall hearken*[y]. And it may be one reason why Moses was now present when God spake these words in the mount, that he might consent to this truth which was now so solemnly pronounced in his hearing, that Jesus was the great person of whom he had prophesied. Now God bidding the apostles *hear him,* and Moses himself, to whom they had hearkened all this while, being content that he should take his room; it is an argument of something to be declared by him that Moses had not spoken. And what should that be, but only *the words of eternal life,* which was but obscurely intimated and shadowed in the ancient law; but by him was preached so clearly and distinctly, that the voice of the heavens is not more audible?

There is nothing, I shall show in due place, that our Saviour preached so frequently, nothing upon which he insisted so long and earnestly, and took such pains to settle in men's minds, as this belief, that *eternal life* shall be the portion of all that do well. And therefore when God the Father bade them *hear him,* who made it his principal business to publish these glad tidings to the world, it was the very same as if this voice had said in express words, *This is my beloved Son, in whom I am well pleased; believe him, he shall give you eternal life.*

This is the *commandment* his Father gave him, as you heard before[z]. This is *the will of him that sent him*[a]. This is *the promise that he hath promised us, even eternal life*[b]. And therefore he stands engaged to bestow it, and we agree with him for it when we enter into his service. For you may observe further, that as to hear Moses was to embrace the covenant that God made with them by him; so we can understand no less by *hearing the Son of God,* than our entering into the new covenant, of which he is the Mediator; which is founded upon better promises than the former, whereby we have a title to a celestial, not an earthly inheritance, whereof

[y] Deut. xviii. 15. [z] John xii. 50. [a] vi. 40. [b] 1 John ii. 25.

he is the Lord, and to which he hath engaged himself to be our conductor.

And indeed Moses and Elias, who were never called the sons of God, much less by a voice from heaven so termed, appearing now with our Saviour in glory, it was a notable sign that he should be taken up to a far greater glory than theirs, and have power of changing men into such a condition as that wherein he was now transfigured; and in the meantime should preach that life and immortality which they saw conferred upon those two persons to honour him.

Whom the disciples, you may observe again, saw in a glory so much greater than the lawgiver himself now had, that if the voice from heaven had been silent, it would have been an argument our Saviour should be the Lord of glory. For when they desired to make their abode there, and for that purpose to build three tabernacles, they say, *one for thee, and one for Moses, and one for Elias;* putting him in the first place before the other two: which they would not sure have done, had not Moses and Elias done reverence to him as a greater person than themselves.

I shall end this with a tradition among the Hebrews, which, if it signify any thing, may serve to show that Jesus is their long expected Christ. For R. Bechai saith[c], that when Jacob speaks of the coming of Shilo, he comprehends not only the last Redeemer (the Messiah), but the first redeemer also, i. e. Moses, who shall have the honour then to attend upon the Messiah, and enter into the holy land: according to what the masters say upon Exod. xv. 1, where the words are, "then Moses יָשִׁיר shall sing." And in the great commentary upon Deuteronomy they write, (as the same author goes on,) that "God said to Moses, Because thou didst give thy life for them in this world, (desiring that God would blot his name out of the book of life to preserve theirs,) in the world to come, i. e. the days of the Messiah, when I shall bring Elias to them, you two shall enter in together." Which may possibly be the meaning of those words, *Art thou Elias? and he said, I am not. Art*

[c] In Gen. xlix. 10. [Cited by Jacobus Alting, in Schilo, lib. i. cap. 5. tom. v. p. 6 sqq.; and by Martinus Helvicus in his dissertation on the prophecy of Jacob, appended to the second volume of the Critici Sacri, p. 62.]

thou that prophet[d]? i. e. Moses, who alone was worthy of the name of ὁ προφήτης, 'the prophet,' above all others. Now if there were any ground of such expectation, that these two should come in their own persons, you see it here fulfilled on this holy mount; where Moses who was so much in mount Horeb, and Elias who used mount Carmel, now appeared, and had communication with him about his ἔξοδος, 'departure' out of this world unto his heavenly kingdom[e].

The mount where they met, and where Jesus was transfigured, is generally believed to be Tabor; as Hermon, a little hill near Jordan, there is a tradition, was the place from whence Elias was taken up to heaven. In these two mountains, says Proclus[f], our Lord Jesus was proclaimed the *beloved Son of God*, from whom we may expect immortal bliss: at Hermon, when he was baptized in Jordan; on Tabor, when he was transfigured, and appeared in a glory as much greater than Elias's, as the high mountain Tabor was above the little hill of Hermon. And so was fulfilled, says he, that prophesy of the psalmist, *Tabor and Hermon shall rejoice in thy name*[g]. In both places was published this joyful news, that God had sent his Son to be the Saviour of the world. First in the mount from whence Elias was transported into heaven; and then in the mount where he came to attend on our Lord when he was transfigured, God the Father, βεβαιῶν υἱότητα, 'confirming his Sonship,' proclaimed again with a loud voice, *This is my beloved Son, in whom I am well pleased; hear him.* For "he that heareth him heareth me," as Proclus there glosses; "and he that is ashamed of him and his words, of him will I be ashamed in my glory."

Let us listen to him therefore: and since we hear him say, as I noted before, *Verily, verily, I say unto you, he that heareth my words, and believeth on him that sent me, hath everlasting life, and shall not come into condemnation, but is passed from death unto life*[h]; let us take it for as express a declaration from God the Father, as if that voice which required them to hear Jesus had said, "You that are obedient to my Son have everlasting life, and are in no danger to perish,

[d] John i. 21.
[e] Luke ix. 31.
[f] Orat. viii. [in Auct. Nov. Bibli-oth. Gr. patr. per Combefim, tom. i. col. 397.]
[g] Ps. lxxxix. 12.
[h] John v. 24.

being translated from the dominion of death to be heirs of life."

II. And now, from the consideration of the words that were spoken, let us pass to the manner wherein they were delivered: which is so vastly different from that wherein God spake formerly to Moses and the children of Israel from another mountain, that I cannot but think it was intended to signify something of the grace of *eternal life*, which Jesus brings to us. When he was transfigured and his face shone as the sun, the evangelist tells us moreover that his *raiment became glistering, exceeding white as snow*, and that *a bright cloud also overshadowed them*, out of which the voice beforenamed came, saying, *This is my beloved Son*, &c. Which, if it be compared with former divine manifestations of the same kind, we may reasonably look upon as an indication, that this person came to discover (1) something more glorious than Moses had done, and (2) something that expresses more abundant love and kindness of God towards men; which is nothing else but *eternal life*.

First, I say, something more glorious and resplendent, or, as the apostle speaks, *the light of the knowledge of the glory of God*, which we behold *in the face of Jesus Christ*[i]. For the mount to which Moses went up, and where he and the people heard God speak to them, was all covered with *clouds and thick darkness*. Thus God himself told him beforehand he would appear[k]. And so he did when the day prefixed for it came[l]. Unto that *thick darkness* Moses drew near[m]. And the people also stood underneath the mountain, beholding it burn with fire into the midst of heaven, *with darkness, clouds, and thick darkness*[n]. All which places the reader may be pleased to consult: together with Exod. xxiv. 18, where we find that Moses went into the midst of this cloud, and there was covered and quite obscured from their sight. A very fit emblem of the obscurity of the knowledge which they then had of God and of his will; and of the terrors of the law, which was *a ministration of death*, as the apostle speaks, and so astonished them with the thunders and lightning which came out of the cloud, that they fled and *stood afar off*[o]. As on

[i] 2 Cor. iv. 6. [k] Exod. xix. 9. [l] Ver. 16, 18. [m] xx. 21. [n] Deut. iv. 11. Exod. xix. 17. [o] Exod. xx. 18.

the other side, God appearing now to our Saviour in a quite contrary manner, on the top of another mountain, where there was no black cloud, (though it was in the night,) no smoke or sulphurous vapour, much less a thick darkness hiding him from his disciples' sight, nothing but a bright and lightsome cloud which overshadowed them, and showed them the glory wherein he shone; it was a lively representation of the *light* which he (*the light of the world*) came to *give to them that sat in darkness and in the shadow of death*, and of the glory and bliss whereof he was the minister; unto which he invited mankind in words of grace and sweetness, as he did his disciples to stay here on the mountain, by those cheerful beams wherewith the glory of the Lord surrounded them.

For this manner of appearing (as I said secondly) plainly suggests some greater manifestation of the love and kindness, the goodness and bounty of heaven to mankind, than had been made before in that way of revelation to Moses, which was so much different from the sweetness and amiableness of this. When Moses conversed with God upon mount Sinai, he descended thither in fire, as the places beforementioned tell you; *and the sight of the glory of the Lord was like devouring fire in the eyes of the children of Israel*[p]. But when our blessed Lord took his apostles with him to a sight of the divine glory, there was only the appearance of a wonderful bright and cheerful light; some mild rays from heaven, which had nothing of terror in them, but ravished them with joy to find themselves in so glorious a presence. And therefore they were not left at the foot of this *high mountain*, as Moses left the Israelites at the bottom of the other; but he *brought them up* with him[q]. And they were not put into a fright, as the Israelites were, who removed their station at the sight of the fire on mount Sinai; nor did they shriek, as their forefathers did there, who cried out, saying, *Why should we die? for this great fire will consume us; if we hear the voice of the Lord our God any more, we shall die. Speak thou with us, and we will hear: but let not God speak with us, lest we die*[r]. But they were ravished out of themselves with the glory of this

[p] Exod. xxiv. 17; Deut. v. 22, 23. [q] Matt. xvii. 1. [r] Deut. v. 25; Exod. xx. 19.

sight; which was so inviting to their eyes, that they wished for no other station, but desired to remain perpetually fixed there. They were so far from running away, that they said, *Let us make here three tabernacles;* as if they meant to pitch there the place of their abode, and never take their eyes from so beautiful a light.

It is observable also, that in the dark mountain where Moses was, together with the fire and thunder and lightnings, there was the *noise of a trumpet exceeding loud;* which made not only *all the people tremble,* but *the whole mount quaked greatly*[s]. And God spake likewise to the people *with a great voice*[t]; wherewith both they were so astonished as to wish never to hear it more, and Moses himself also (so terrible was the sight together with the noise) said, *I exceedingly fear and quake*[u]. Whereas on the mountain where our Lord was transfigured there was not one such frightful flash, nor the least dreadful sound; nothing but his own glistering body, the splendour of Moses and Elias, the brightness of a heavenly cloud, and this one sweet voice, which proclaimed nothing but love and grace in their ears, *This is my beloved Son, in whom I am well pleased; hear him.*

St. Matthew indeed tells us, that when the disciples *heard, they fell on their faces, and were sore afraid*[x]. But this doth not signify that they were seized with any horror at the dreadfulness of the sound; but only amazed at the suddenness of the voice, and the marvellous splendour of the light. And therefore the other evangelists do not mention any such terror after the voice; which, being accompanied with a glory they had never beheld, might well amaze them, but did not make them tremble. The very apparition of angels was wont to be so surprising as to dazzle men's eyes, and make them bow their faces to the ground[y]: and therefore such a glorious splendour as this, equalling that of the sun, might well make the apostles fall prostrate upon the earth, in great fear or amazement. But then our Lord presently came and comforted them by a gracious touch, bidding them *arise, and not be afraid,* though they saw such a light, and heard such a voice as this: to which

[s] Exod. xix. 16, 18. [t] Deut. v. 21. [u] Heb. xii. 21. [x] xvii. 6. [y] Luke xxiv. 5.

indeed they had not been accustomed, but was the most amiable, and ought to be the most welcome, of any that could salute the eyes and ears of mankind.

St. Mark, it is observable, says, that before this voice came out of the heavenly glory, *they were sore afraid*[z]; i. e. were so amazed at such an unwonted sight, or, as Proclus calls it[a], *τὸ παράδοξον τῆς θείας ἐλλάμψεως*, 'the strangeness and unexpectedness of the divine brightness shining on them,' that it put them quite beside themselves. But that it was a sweet mixture of those devout passions, *fear* and *joy*, is manifest from the foregoing verse, with which those words cohere: where you read they were so delighted and ravished with the sight, that they thought not of going down from thence any more, but were projecting for their perpetual habitation in that happy place. Which rapture seems to have been a foretaste of the joy which they were to expect when he should ascend to that glorious state, which was now represented in his transfiguration on the mount.

Before I conclude this, I shall here take notice, as I pass to what remains, of something that may help to prove our Lord Jesus is the person by whom God always intended to speak his mind to the world. For it was at this very time (when the Israelites, by reason of the terrible sights and thundering noises, desired God they might hear his voice no more) that he promised to speak to them by such a prophet as Moses, and in a more familiar manner; requiring them to hear that person, when he came and spake, as they themselves desired. So you read, Deut. xviii. 15—18, where, when they say, *Let me not hear again the voice of the Lord my God, neither let me see this great fire any more, that I die not;* the Lord said, *They have well spoken. I will raise them up a prophet from among their brethren like unto thee, and I will put my word in his mouth, and he shall speak unto them all that I have commanded him.* Which was perfectly fulfilled in our blessed Saviour, (whatsoever lesser meaning it might have before,) who *spake the words of God*, and *not of himself, but as the Father gave him commandment;* and was a prophet like to Moses, as in other regards, so in this, that he was with God upon the

[z] Mark ix. 6. [a] Orat. viii. in Transfigur. Domini. [col. 392 C.]

mount, heard him speak there to the Israelites his disciples, is commended to them as the person they should *hear;* but in a voice so sweet, and in a way so agreeable, that they did not wish never to hear it more, but rather always to be so happy as to have such friendly converse with heaven, and receive such tokens of God's fatherly love.

For as the fire and smoke and darkness, together with those terrible noises, were testimonies from God to Moses, that they who would not hear him, but transgressed his laws, should be the objects of his dreadful displeasure, and be destroyed from among their neighbours; so this universal light and brightness which smiled on them, in the cloud and in his raiment, and in his countenance and in his company, when these gracious words sounded in their ears, were most manifest tokens from heaven of the extraordinary favour of God towards those that obey the Lord Jesus; who shall be saved from death, and made exceeding happy and glorious.

The far greater part of the precepts of the law being negative, as is evident even from the Ten Commandments, (to say nothing of the computation which the Jews have made of the whole,) it abounds more with threatenings and fearful denunciations of judgment than it doth with gracious and inviting promises. But most of the precepts of the gospel being affirmative, obliging us to do all the good we can, and to be *abundant in the work of our Lord;* you read therefore more frequently of *exceeding great and precious promises* to encourage our labour of love, than of threatenings to deter us from evil doing. And consonant to this, as that frightful appearance of old on Mount Sinai was to show God's anger and fiery indignation against offenders; so this comfortable presence now on Mount Tabor was to represent his loving-kindness and tender mercy to all obedient persons. And as the anger of God, declared by the fire and smoke, was his inflicting death upon them; so his good will, declared by this friendly light and clearness in the heavens, is his bestowing upon us life. And as by the former Moses was noted by God to be the minister of death to all transgressors; so our Lord was hereby represented as the minister of life and righteousness to all that in him live godly.

Now that all these observations are not the product of mere fancy, but have some real truth in them, this is none of the least arguments; that the Jews themselves[a] make it a question worth the answering, Why God uttered his voice to Moses out of the midst of the fire and darkness, and not rather out of the midst of light. Which is a plain acknowledgment of the nobleness and perfection of this way wherein God manifested himself upon the *holy mount*, (as St. Peter calls it[b],) and that it was far more desirable than that wherein he appeared to Moses; else they would not have moved this doubt, and endeavoured so laboriously to solve it: pretending that it was only to show in what a dismal condition they were without the law, which was not to be sent till after forty days were past; during all which time the court of the heavenly King was hung with black, and not with white. Which, as it is a frivolous conceit, so hath no truth in it: for God spake the Ten Words or Commandments out of the fire and smoke before Moses went to stay in the mount forty days; where he only received the pattern of God's house (which he was to make) and all belonging to it, together with the two tables whereon those Ten Commandments were engraven. All the rest of the laws were spoken to him *out of the tabernacle of the congregation* after he had built it[c]: and we do not find then the heavens hung with white, (to use their phrase,) as they were now when he spake concerning our Saviour, and bade his disciples hear him.

But I intend not to trouble myself with confuting their idle fancies. The use that I make of this question is, that if they would have thought it a disparagement to their master Moses, (did they not satisfy themselves with this ridiculous reason for it,) to be spoken unto after such a manner as the Scripture of truth relates; then, by their own confession, it is a great honour to our Lord and Master, and argues his high dignity, that the divine Majesty spake to him in such a way as they cannot but esteem most perfect, and agreeable to his divine goodness. And we may look upon this pure light (in which God is said to dwell) as a sign that heaven was to be opened by this person, and that he would restore us to the glory of God, of which we were all fallen short; and bring mankind to

[a] Pirke Eliezer, c. xli. [p. 110.] [b] [2 Pet. i. 18.]
[c] Levit. i. 1.

that joy and satisfaction of heart which the disciples began to feel in themselves at this most comfortable sight.

And I make no question, had not the holy books told us so expressly that God spake to them in clouds and fire and vapour, they would have fabled that he appeared to their master in pure light, and shone about him in the brightness of his glory, without the least darkness to obscure it. For I find that many of those things which the holy story of the New Testament reports in honour of John Baptist or of our Blessed Saviour, they have thrust into the story of Moses, (where he himself in his books hath not confessed the contrary,) to keep him in the greater credit with their nation in this time of their calamitous desertion. It being recorded for example, that John Baptist was born when his parents were very old, and could not believe it was possible for them to have a child; (which makes his birth a wonder, being out of the course of nature;) they have made bold to tell the same of Moses, (but with a large addition of years,) whose mother Jochebed, they say, was no less than an hundred and thirty years old when she was delivered of him: which Aben Ezra, in his notes upon the text[c], is desirous should pass for a current truth. And as we read, that when our Saviour came into the world, the *glory of the Lord* (an exceeding great light from heaven) shone round about the shepherds, who had the first news of it; (which was intended as a note of his divinity and heavenly descent;) so they have devised[d] that, at the nativity of Moses, the house where he was born was filled with such a light, that they could not see by reason of its splendour.

In like manner the apostle proves our Lord to be greater than the angels, *far above all principality and power*[e]; and therefore Moses, forsooth, must be raised to this wondrous pitch; whom some of their rabbins (all are not so immodest) will have to be higher ממלאכים השרת[f] than the 'angels of ministry;' 'far above all creatures (as another expresses it) both superior and inferior.' As if they meant to equal him with that great Lord who we believe is raised far above every name

[c] A. Ezra in Exod. ii. 1.
[d] R. Solomon in Exod. ii. 3.
[e] Heb. i. 3, 4. Eph. i. 19, 20.
[f] R. Moses Haccozi; R. Joshua F. Sobib in Exod. xxx. [Vid. J. Alting. in Schilo, lib. v. cap. 13. tom. v. p. 131.]

that is named, *not only in this world, but also in that which is to come.* And because also our Lord, we affirm, and are sure, is now the *minister of the heavenly sanctuary*, where he presents his own blood before God for us, as Aaron did the blood of beasts in the earthly sanctuary; therefore they likewise have feigned (as Maimonides relates from the mouth of their doctors[ε]) that their master Moses is not dead, but ascended, ימשמש במרום, 'and ministers to God in the heavenly places.' And because our Lord is here said to be transfigured on this mountain, and his face shone like the sun; they have therefore transformed Moses also, who, they say, was found by the angel of death (whom God sent to the mountain whither he was gone up, to take away his life) writing the great name of God; "and his face was as the sun, and he himself like an angel of the Lord." I have observed the same before about the *Bath-kol*, voice from heaven, which spake to our Saviour, whose glory they study to eclipse by spreading abroad a number of tales concerning the like approbation given to their doctors.

I am bold to call these reports by that name, and to ascribe them to that cause, because there are no footsteps of such things in the history which Moses wrote of himself, (who by all just ways endeavoured to beget in them a belief that he was a prophet sent of God;) and because such inventions might easily come into the minds of those obstinate persons, who knew not how to confute Christianity, which interest and prejudice would not let them receive, but were desirous by any means, though never so false, to raise Moses to the same degree of greatness and esteem with the *author and finisher of our faith.* But it is to be considered then, that they suppose such things to be a notable sign of the excellency of that person to whom they really belong: and consequently, that our Lord Jesus, who hath these very marks upon him which they would engrave on Moses, being thus described in those books that are certainly divine among us, as clearly as Moses is in any other regards commended in those that are truly holy among them, is a great prophet indeed, far greater than Moses, (who never durst say

ε Ludov. Capella, ex Præfat. in Talm. not. in Matt. xvii. 3. [apud Critic. Sacr. in loc. col. 607.]

any such thing of himself, nor is so magnified by any of the succeeding prophets,) the author of a better covenant, and of more divine promises, such as this of *eternal life;* which it is most agreeable for him to bestow, whose kingdom was not in this world, (as Moses's was,) but he reigns in the other world *Lord of all* for evermore.

III.

To him God the Father hath given a third testimony, (unto which it is now time to pass;) and it is a very express record of this truth, that we *have eternal life,* and that *it is in his Son.* It is set down, you know, in John xii. 28, where, upon our Saviour's request to God that he would glorify his own name, a voice from heaven gave this answer, *I have both glorified it, and will glorify it again.* The particle *it* hath nothing answering to it in the Greek, but is put in by the translators to supply the sense. And some are of the opinion that the word σε is to be understood, and the meaning to be thus rendered, I have both glorified *thee,* and will glorify *thee* again. But there is no need of this; we may as well refer the word *glorify* to *name,* as our translation doth, and it will come at last to the same sense: for God's name was glorified by glorifying his Son, as appears from John xi. 4. And so St. Cyril of Alexandria observed long ago[h]: "Whether the Scripture be, *glorify thy Son,* or *glorify thy name,* ταὐτόν ἐστι τῇ τῶν θεωρημάτων ἀκριβείᾳ, it is all one in exact contemplation of things."

Now if the truth of these words be thoroughly examined, how he *had glorified him,* and how he *would glorify him again,* we shall meet in both with a plain testimony that *eternal life is in his Son* to bestow on us. Let us consider them briefly apart.

I. As for the former, I find that God had already *glorified* him before he spake these words, three ways:

1. By his transfiguration, of which I now discoursed, for then St. Luke saith, *they saw his glory*[i]; and that by this glory which they saw the Father testified he should be made glorious in the heavens, and able to make us so, I refer you to what I have said already on this argument.

[h] Fragment. l. viii. in Joh. [tom. iv. p. 705 B.] [i] ix. 32.

2. And I need not use many words to show that he had also glorified him very frequently by the many wonderful works which he had wrought; for in them it is likewise expressly said, *he manifested forth his glory*[j]: and the multitude were excited by them to magnify him with Hosannas, and to cry out, *Glory in the highest*[k]. By these also he showed the power wherewith he was endued to do any thing that he had promised; and they moved his disciples' hearts, as you read in the place now mentioned, to *believe on him*[l].

3. But there was a third glorification of him, to which I believe these words have a more special reference, because it was very famous, and but newly passed; which was his raising Lazarus from the dead. By this Jesus said expressly that glory should redound to God the Father, and that he, the Son of God, should also be *glorified thereby*[m]. For this very end, he there teaches his disciples, Lazarus fell sick; and he therefore delayed to go and recover him, (though his great friend,) that there might be a fit opportunity, by the miraculous resurrection of so noted a person, (as Lazarus was, it appears, by the coming of such numbers to comfort his sister[n],) and in a place so nigh to Jerusalem[o], where the greatest opposition was made against him, to do honour to Jesus, and to make it known that he assumed not more glory to himself than God the Father gave him. This was a very great testimony from God, that indeed *life* was in him, and that he did not vainly call himself *the resurrection and the life*[p], because he now, with his Almighty word, restored one to life who had been so long dead, that there was no possibility of his reviving by the very *life* itself.

Hereby he declared that, *as the Father hath life in himself, so he hath given the Son to have life in himself*[q]. What he had said before in his preaching, he now justified by his works; according as he himself foretold he would, when he said, *Verily, verily, the hour is coming, and now is, when the dead shall hear the voice of the Son of God*[r]. The hour which was then coming, yea, was just at hand, seems to be this time when he raised Lazarus up out of his grave; declaring

[j] John ii. 11. [k] Luke xix. 37, 38. [l] John ii. 11. [m] John xi. 4.
[n] Ver. 19. [o] Ver. 18. [p] Ver. 25. [q] John v. 26. [r] Ver. 25.

thereby both the truth of what he had said, that *he had life in himself*[s]; and likewise that there would be another hour, (as it presently there follows[t],) wherein all men whatsoever shall rise out of their graves at his voice, *and they that have done good shall come forth unto the resurrection of life*, as *they that have done evil unto the resurrection of damnation.* They might well believe it, because he said it who proved himself to be *the Truth*, by such works as none could do but he that was *the Life.*

II. But this is not all that we are to consider in this testimony of the Father, who doth not only say that he *had* glorified him, but that he *would* glorify him again: which was done also at three several times.

1. At his death, when *many of the graves of the saints that slept were opened*[u]: for the very rocks rent, and the earth did quake, and the veil of the temple was torn in sunder from the top to the bottom, and the sun refused to give its light; and such an amazement came upon the centurion, who was then upon the guard, that *he glorified God*, by confessing that Jesus was *a righteous man*[x], and no pretender to a title that did not belong to him, but, as other evangelists express it, *the Son of God.* To these wonderful things concurring at his death to *glorify* him and do him honour the voice from heaven seems to have had some respect, because of what follows: *Now shall the prince of this world be cast out. And I, if I be lifted up from the earth, will draw all men unto me. This he said, signifying what death he should die*[y]. For even now, when he seemed most weak, he began to tread the devil under his feet. Now he began to draw not only the Jews to him, but other men, the Romans also; one of whose captains, in the midst of his reproach, confessed him to be *the Son of God.* The very *opening of the graves* served to adorn the triumph he was about to make over the powers of darkness, being a sign that he had now despoiled him *who hath the power of death*, which is the devil: and that he had *life in himself*, and will give it us, especially now that he hath finished his triumph, and is glorified at God's right hand. Of

[s] John v. 26. [t] Ver. 28, 29. [u] Matt. xxvii. 52.
[x] Luke xxiii. 47. [y] Ver. 31–33.

which the rending of the veil also was no obscure token, showing that *we have liberty* (as the apostle speaks) *to enter into the holiest by the blood of Jesus*[z].

It may seem indeed an uncouth form of speech to call his crucifixion by the name of ὕψωσις, *lifting up* from the earth, or exaltation; but one may say, and with great truth, that Christ's death upon the cross, (as St. Cyril of Alexandria speaks[a],) ὕψος ἦν τὸ ἐπὶ εὐκλείᾳ καὶ δόξῃ νοούμενον, "was his promotion, contrived for his fame and glory; for he is glorified perpetually for this, having procured many benefits to mankind by its means." This is one part of the record of the Father to this truth, when he said *he would glorify* our Saviour: which, you see, was as much as to say, he would make it appear, even when he hung upon the cross, that he was able to open men's graves, and unloose the chains of death, and in due time raise them up to everlasting life: for,

2. God further glorified him at his resurrection; which was attended with the resurrection of the dead bodies of those saints whose graves were opened at his death[b]. There were several witnesses of this in Jerusalem, to whom those persons deceased appeared, as there were of his own resurrection, which was attested by chosen persons, to whom he showed himself openly. And then he was *lifted up from the earth* in another more noble and sublime sense than he had been before upon the cross. Then angels came in bright array to testify to him what he had said of himself, that God, having *been glorified in him, had glorified him in himself*[c]. This was a very glorious testimony that indeed he *hath life in himself*, and shall be the Author of eternal life to us. And therefore he is called *the Prince* (or Author) *of life*[d], because by *that which overcame death*, (his resurrection,) ἔγνωμεν αὐτὸν ὄντα ζωὴν, &c.[e], 'we know him to be life, and the Son of the living God.' But of this more hereafter.

3. Another act whereby this saying (*I will glorify thee again*) was verified, I take to be *his exaltation* by God's own right hand to the throne of glory in the heavens. This he

[z] Heb. x. 19.
[a] Fragment. l. viii. in Joh. [p. 707 E.]
[b] Matt. xxvii. 52, 53.
[c] John xiii. 31, 32.
[d] Acts iii. 15.
[e] S. Cyrill. ib. in Joh. xii. 28. [p. 705 E.]

prayed for with the greatest ardency and the most assured expectation, because God the Father, he saith, *had given him power* (i. e. the promise of it) *over all flesh, that he might give eternal life to as many as God had given him*[f]. This promise, I understand it, was made to him when God uttered this voice from heaven, *I have both glorified thee, and will glorify thee again.* Then God *gave him a power* to raise up all, as he had lately done Lazarus, and to give them immortal happiness: of which, as he had then the grant, so he now desires in this prayer to be put in possession. And therefore when he says, ver. 1, *Father, the hour is come: glorify thy Son,* &c., I take the meaning to be as if he had thus spoke; Now is the time to do that which thy voice from heaven assured me should be done, viz. to *glorify me* in so complete a manner that I may *glorify thee,* and give eternal life to all the faithful. This he spake with *eyes lifted up to heaven,* from whence that voice came, which bare witness of him that he should be glorified more than ever, and gave him authority to lay claim to the highest power, of bestowing immortality.

Which power when God the Father had actually put into his hands, according to this prayer and his own promise, (of which he could not fail, having engaged himself before a multitude *to glorify him,*) then *being made perfect, he became the Author of eternal salvation to them that obey him*[g]. Then he was *made a priest for ever, not after the law,* which was but a weak institution, but *after the power of an endless life:* whereby he is *able to save them to the uttermost that come unto God by him*[h]. He can raise up us, and all that succeed us, as well as he did Lazarus and others: in whom he gave only a little taste of his power to give us life that shall never die.

This now is the third testimony of the Father, who, in the audience both of friends and strangers, said, *He had both glorified him, and would glorify him again.* That he *had,* was then very well known; and it was as certain (because he said it) that he *would* do the same again. By the testimony also of sufficient persons it appears that he made good this promise, even at his death; after which he raised him out of his

[f] John xvii. 1, 2. [g] Heb. v. 9. [h] vii. 16, 17, 25.

grave, and lift him up far above all heavens, that he may *be glorified* once more[i], by raising us up from the dead, and promoting us to eternal glory with himself.

"O wonderful news! he that was lifted up to hang on a cross is preferred now from his grave to a glorious throne! And to come at it, he takes a journey through the air! the clouds running under his feet become his chariot! the sky opens to him, and the heavens with open arms receive him! the troops of angels join together in triumphal songs, and persuade his amazed disciples to keep that day a festival on earth as they did in heaven! Do not stand gazing here, say they, any longer, but go and preach this wonder to the world. By his departure represent his coming again; for so shall he come in like manner as ye have seen him go into heaven[k]."

O how wonderful are thy works, O Lord! which give us hope (as the blessed St. Paul said when he thought of these things) that we shall then be caught up in the clouds to meet the Lord in the air; and so shall we be ever with the Lord. We can do no less than, to those voices which came so oft from heaven to testify this, add our poor voice of praise and thanksgiving; saying with the angels, when he came into the world, *Glory be to God in the highest;* and with the multitude, when they met him at mount Olivet, *Blessed be the King that cometh in the name of the Lord, peace in heaven and glory in the highest.* Glory be to him who is the fountain of life, coming from the fountain of life, the Father[l]. Glory be to him who is the river of God, proceeding from the divine abyss, and inseparably one with it: the treasure of the Father's goodness, and of ever-springing blessedness: the water of life, who gives life to the world: the increated beam of the Father of lights, from whom he is undivided: who, being in the form of God, took on him the form of a servant; not lessening the dignity of his divinity, but sanctifying the mass of our humanity.

Him the angels praise, the archangels worship, the authori-

[i] 2 Thess. i. 10.

[k] Athanasius in Assumption. Christi. [tom. ii. p. 465 B.]

[l] Cyril. Hieros. in occurs. Domini. [Πηγὴ τοῦ τῆς δικαιοσύνης ποταμοῦ, τοῦ μονογενοῦς, ὁ πατήρ. Catech. xi. § 20. p. 159 A.]

ties reverence, the powers glorify; the cherubims do him service; the seraphims acknowledge his divinity; the sun and moon minister to him: who hath broken in pieces the gates of hell, and opened the gates of heaven, and abolished death, and confounded the devil, and dissolved the curse, and made sorrow cease, and trodden sin under foot, and restored the creation, and enlightened the world. And therefore let us sing hymns to him with the angels, and rejoice in the light of the glory of God with the shepherds, and adore him with the wise men, and joyfully magnify him with the blessed Virgin, and confess him with Simeon and Anna, who were glad to see his salvation: that so we at last may also be possessed of eternal good things, through the grace and the bowels of mercy, and the loving-kindness of our Lord and God and Saviour Jesus Christ: to whom with the Father and the Holy Ghost be glory and dominion for ever and ever. Amen.

CHAP. VII.

Concerning the testimony of the Word, the second witness in heaven.

If we had no further witness of this truth but that which hath been already produced, we might well rejoice in the comfort which God the Father hath given us, and rely upon Jesus as the Author of *eternal life* to all those that obey him. The testimony of worthy men, as the apostle here observes, is readily received by us; and therefore we ought to be afraid of being so rudely profane as to reject the testimony of God, which is of far greater weight than theirs, and hath been solemnly given, you see, more than once for the confirmation of our faith. But God the Father, *willing more abundantly to show* (if I may borrow those words in Heb. vi. 17.) *unto the heirs of* this *promise the immutability of his counsel*, hath graciously vouchsafed us further assurance; and by his *word* hath told us as much as he himself declared by those voices from heaven.

What we are to understand by the *Word* in this place, I have shown in the former treatise, viz. the Lord Jesus himself,

God-man, or *God the Word made flesh*; who, as St. Athanasius speaks[n], is Ἑρμηνεὺς καὶ Ἄγγελος τοῦ ἑαυτοῦ Πατρὸς, "The Interpreter and Ambassador of his own Father. For, as by the word a man speaks we understand his mind, which is the fountain from whence it comes, so (but by a more lively representation, and after an incomparably more excellent manner) we, beholding the power of the *Word*, come to the knowledge of his Father: as our Saviour himself saith, *He that hath seen me hath seen the Father also*[o]." From him this eternal *Word* came down and was incarnate, not only to reveal his will, but to die for our sins, and to seal what he had preached with his blood. After which God raised him from the dead, and set him at his own right hand in the heavens; from whence he testified as loudly that he hath in him *eternal life* for us as he did that he is the *Son of God*. This witness therefore let us now examine, and look over again the old evidences which we formerly searched; wherein, I doubt not, we shall find this truth most clearly contained. And the testimony of the *Word*, you know, as well as that of the *Father*, was threefold; once to St. Stephen, a second time to St. Paul, and a third to this beloved disciple St. John.

I.

For the first of these, it stands upon record in so many words, that St. Stephen, being full of the Holy Ghost, and looking up steadfastly to heaven, *saw the heavens opened, and beheld the glory of God, and Jesus standing at his right hand*[p]. Thus he declares, not to some simple people, who perhaps might believe him for his confidence, but to the great council of Jerusalem, who, he knew, were very much disaffected, nay, perfectly opposite to this truth. To them he protests in open court, when he was upon his trial, and bids them mark it, (Ἰδού, *Behold*, take notice of what I now tell you,) *I see the heavens opened, and the Son of man standing on the right hand of God*. And he said it, though he knew he stood in certain peril of his life for this declaration. It was for no other reason that Jesus himself was put to death, but

[n] Orat. contra Gentes, p. 49. [§ 45. ed. Ben. tom. i. p. 43 E.]
[o] John xiv. 9. [p] Acts vii. 55, 56.

because he said he was the *Son of God;* and that they should *see the Son of man sitting at the right hand of power, and coming in the clouds of heaven.* And therefore for him to confirm so peremptorily this odious truth, after they had killed him, and thereby make them guilty of innocent blood, yea, of the blood of their great King, was a crime he might well expect they would punish with as great severity as was in their power to express: which we may be confident he would never have provoked, had he not been so sure of the glory of our Saviour that he could not hold his peace. For who is there so frantic as to expose himself to death for such an unprofitable lie? It is not in the nature of man to suffer so shamefully as he did in his own person, merely to bring a little false honour to another. To fancy a person of his wisdom guilty of such madness, is a kind of distraction in him that supposes it: who, were he sober, would be taught otherwise by the abhorrence he feels in himself to throw away his life for a trifle.

Since there is not the least reason then to question but that this holy man beheld *the glory of God, and Jesus standing at his right hand,* (i. e. the gates of heaven being set open, that he might have the favour to look into the celestial palace, the *majesty of God* was there represented to him sitting on a throne, as it used to be in the prophetical visions; and he beheld the Lord Jesus the very next person to the divine Majesty;) we may clearly see in this vision both the things that St. John here asserts, viz. that eternal life is in Jesus the Son of God, to give to those that effectually believe on his name.

I. As for the first, the *power* wherewith he is invested to give eternal *life*, it is visible from his *standing at God's right hand:* which denotes his omnipotent virtue to effect what he pleases. For by the *right hand of God* Jesus himself was exalted to the right hand of power, as you read, Acts ii. 33. v. 31, and therefore being placed there, it signifies that he can do for us what God hath done for him; that is, exalt us to the like glory in the heavens where he is. And as this is a clear proof of one of the things here recorded, that *life is in him;* so the other—

II. That God hath given the faithful a right to this eternal *life* with him, and that he will bestow it on us, is no less evident from the very end of this vision. For we can see no other

reason of this glorious appearance of our Saviour to him, but to encourage him in his preaching, and incite him to witness a good confession, as he himself had done before this great council and before Pontius Pilate; in hope that if it cost him his life, as it had done our Saviour, he should live and reign with him in that glorious place where he now beheld him. This was the purpose of the heavenly *Word's* coming now to him, that he might not doubt of his promises, nor shrink in the least from what he had preached, though he should die for it; which would do him no greater harm than to dispatch him presently to the celestial habitations. In the very beginning of his history we read, that he had no sooner heard the indictment read which they had drawn up against him, but, before he spake a word for himself, the whole council *beheld his face as it had been the face of an angel*[q]. There appeared, that is, such a bright and sweet majesty in his countenance, as made him look like one of the celestial inhabitants, who had already prevented the glorious state to which he was going. And his answer to their charge being ended, their barbarous rage was not more apparent than it was that the heavens opened to *receive his spirit*, and let it into the dwelling of God, as soon as he should put off his mortality.

There he beheld Jesus *standing* (whereas he is commonly represented as *sitting*) *at God's right hand;* that he might know he was ready to meet his spirit, and entertain it into his heavenly mansions; as well as that he was coming to destroy his persecutors, and put an end to their power and nation. And he saw also the *glory of God*, as the crown he should win by his martyrdom: which had as sensible an effect upon his heart for the confirming of his faith and constancy, as if he had heard the Almighty call to him and say, Μηδὲν ἀγενὲς πάθῃς, ὦ Στέφανε, "Be not fainthearted, O Stephen, nor suffer any degenerous thoughts to enter into thy breast. Though there is no man to stand by thee, no friend on earth to assist thee in this distressed season; yet I with my beloved Son behold what is a-doing. A happy rest and repose is ready for thee. The gates of paradise stand wide open to thee. Have patience a while, and, leaving this temporary life, make haste to that

[q] Acts vi. 15.

which is eternal. Still thou seest God is in human nature; a thing beyond all worldly thoughts. Thou hast been taught by the apostles that the Father hath a genuine beloved Son: behold, I show him to thee, as much as thou canst bear. And he stands at my right hand; that by the very sight of the place thou mayest know the dignity he hath. It was a scandal heretofore to many, that God should be on the earth clothed with flesh: but behold him now with me on high in a celestial, supercelestial condition, still having the form of man; to confirm thee in the belief of the gracious dispensation which is now completed. Be not disturbed, be not dejected, though for his sake thou beest stoned. Beholding the Dispenser of rewards, do not fear the combat. Forsake thy body, and despising it as an earthly prison, as a ruinous house, as a potter's vessel easily broken, come, run hither, being set at liberty, to the portion and inheritance here reserved for thee. For the crown of brave achievements is ready and expects thee. Step over from the earth to heaven, and take it. Leave thy body to the bloody murderers, as a morsel to dogs. Leave the mad, enraged multitude, and come to the quire of angels."

In these words Asterius[r] expresses the sense of this heavenly vision, wherein God showed himself to this valiant man, that he might not be struck with any fear by the greatness of the danger. For this cause he did not send an angel to assist him, as to the apostles in prison, nor any ministering power and fellow-servant, as he speaks; ἀλλ' ἑαυτὸν ἐνεφάνισεν, 'but he presented himself;' that, being the *first-fruits* of the martyrs, he might leave a noble example to all that followed. And indeed what could more encourage them than to hear so holy a man departing the world with these words in his mouth, *I see the heavens opened, and the Son of man standing at the right hand of God?* This was a notable testimony which the heavenly *Word* gave, that he was possessed of *Eternal Life;* whereby he animated this blessed martyr, from what he saw him enjoy, to do as he had done: which could have no force in it to persuade him, unless his meaning had been, that he should no sooner leave the world, but ascend up thither where

[r] Encomium in Protomart. [Auct. nov. Biblioth. patr. Græco-Lat. per Combefim, tom. i. col. 292.]

he was. And so St. Stephen understood it; for as they were stoning him (the greatest punishment the Jews could inflict) he called upon our Saviour, saying, *Lord Jesus, receive my spirit*[s]. He doubted not of audience, when he beheld him who is *sat down at the right hand of the Majesty on high*[t], in another posture; not *sitting*, but *standing* there. "What was the business (to use the words of another ancient bishop[u]) that made him rise thus out of his Father's throne? He saw this noble combatant in his agony, and rose up to crown his victory. And it was as if he had said, Fear not, Stephen; there is none shall beguile thee of thy reward. I am risen out of my throne to reach thee my right hand. Beholding me who was crucified, grapple with the danger that presents itself to thee. I am he whom thou sawest hanging on a tree: by virtue of that crucifixion I will reward thee. I preside in these combats, and deal the crowns to conquerors. Fear not therefore those that go about to stone thee; they do but rear thee a ladder, against their wills, to heaven. Do not fear them; the stones will be but as so many steps to that blessed place where thou seest me. It is not for thee to fear the stones, who art built on me the chief Corner-stone; and therefore canst not fare worse than I do, who am in glory for ever and ever."

With such thoughts as these this good man laid down his life: which is as great an argument as any of this nature can be, that Jesus both can and will give *eternal life* to his followers. For else, a person so full of wisdom that they were not able to dispute with him[x] would not have ventured his life, and endured the worst of deaths, having nothing to comfort him in his agony but only the hope he had from Jesus that he would *receive his spirit*. This was it that gave him such boldness and full assurance of faith. With these words in his mouth he would have died, but that he pitied those who did not see as much as he did: which made him expire in prayer for his persecutors; wishing them no worse than that they might not be hindered by this sin from believing in Jesus, and going thither where he hoped presently to be received.

So the same Asterius[y] rightly understands those words, *Lord, lay not this sin to their charge:* "He doth not wish

[s] Acts vii. 59. [t] Heb. i. 3. [u] Proclus, Orat. xvii. [Auct. nov. &c. tom. i. col. 453.] [x] Acts vi. 10. [y] [ib. col. 296 B.]

them absolute impunity, which had been openly to oppose τῇ τοῦ Θεοῦ διατυπώσει, 'the divine ordinance and constitution,' and to correct the judgment and decree of the most Just, who hath appointed a deserved punishment to murderers; but he begs of God, that, notwithstanding this crime, he would give them true compunction, and bring them to repentance. It being as if he had said, Do not let them die in their uncircumcision. Draw them by repentance to the acknowledgment of thee. Kindle the flame of the Spirit in their hearts. By the means of my blood let them be converted; that being washed in the laver of thy grace, and in thy blood, they may be delivered from their iniquities." A most pious conclusion of this bloody tragedy; one of the principal actors in which was presently after so miraculously touched from heaven, that it was visible our Lord had heard the devout prayer of his martyr in this particular: and therefore had not denied his other request, but received his spirit also unto himself.

II.

For if any thing could be clearer than this to demonstrate the truth I am endeavouring to prove, the great love of our most blessed Lord would not deny it. Who appeared again, as I showed in the former treatise, to a very learned person, of great note and great sanctity among the Jews, and as great an enemy to him; being *consenting* (as he himself confesses [z]) *unto his death, when the blood of his martyr Stephen was shed.* St. Paul I mean, who travelling towards Damascus in a burning rage and fury, and with a sharp commission against Christians, (and therefore in no fit disposition to receive a truth, or to fall into a fancy directly opposite to his present temper and interest,) was suddenly surprised with a great light from heaven; and beheld that Jesus, whom he no more thought to be so glorious than he did the thieves that were crucified with him, presenting himself, and distinctly speaking to him, in such a splendid manner, that *he fell down to the ground, and could not see for the glory of that light* [a]. Whosoever will carefully observe what he was, and how far, as I said, from any such thoughts, and how desperately he had been lately engaged against St. Stephen, and now was prosecuting other of Christ's

[z] Acts xxii. 20. [a] Ver. 7, 11.

disciples, will easily conclude that he had now a real sight of the majesty of the Lord Jesus, at whose feet he fell; whom otherwise no man should have despised and blasphemed more than he. Now if the vision be considered, you will find that it contains in it this truth, that *Jesus is possessed of eternal life to give unto us;* as well as that he is the *Son of God.* For,

I. He beheld him appearing in such a brightness as that before mentioned, far exceeding the splendour of the sun at noonday, according as he himself tells the story[b]. Which plainly declared him to be the King of glory, clothed with the majesty of God, and possessed of an heavenly kingdom, and therefore *able* to give *eternal life* to his servants: which is one of the things that St. John here said God hath testified to us. How should he come by such a robe of light, and how should he appear thus, first to St. Stephen, and now to St. Paul, and how should he present himself thus near to him, and perfectly astonish his bold spirit, if he had not power to do what he pleased? And therefore St. Paul is told by our Lord, at this very time when he saw him in such majesty, that he should *be a witness of what he had seen.* Which had been to no purpose, unless this apparition had something remarkable in it, to prove that he was what he pretended to be in his lifetime, the Son of God most high, whom, according to his word which he passed by a voice from heaven, *he had glorified, and given him power over all flesh.*

II. And accordingly you find that the thing St. Paul witnessed was, that Jesus was *over all, God blessed for ever*[c], and had sent him to preach the *resurrection and everlasting life*[d]. These doctrines our Lord himself had taught him, when, appearing and speaking to him in such a glorious light, he said, *I am Jesus.* As much as to say, "I am he whom you buffeted; whom you scourged; whom you dragged about, first to Caiaphas, then to Pilate; whom you called continually *the carpenter's son;* whom you number among the dead, laughing aloud at those that preach the resurrection. It is I that speak; and therefore believe that which my servant Stephen saw; though, when he told you so, you would not believe it[e]."

[b] Acts xxvi. 13.
[c] Rom. ix. 5.
[d] Acts xiii. 46; xvii. 18.
[e] Asterius, εἰς κορυφαίους Ἀποστόλους, &c. [in Apost. Petr. et Paul. col. 153 C.]

Thus he learnt, saith Asterius, by experience, that Christ was alive, and was neither corrupted by death, nor stolen away secretly by his disciples, but risen from the dead, καὶ βασιλεύει τῶν ὅλων, 'and reigned over the whole world.' This he preached with as great a zeal as before he persecuted. He was such an auxiliary as before he had been an enemy; ἰσχυρὸς ἀμφότερα, 'both strong and resolute.'

III. For you may observe that he did not merely rationally conclude from the glory wherein Jesus was that all he had said was true, and that he was able to give *everlasting life;* but he heard him also say expressly at this time, when he appeared to him, that he would bestow this celestial inheritance upon us, even us Gentiles, who were strangers to the promises, foreigners, and aliens from the commonwealth of Israel, having no such hope. There was nothing against which the pharisaical spirit was more embittered than this, that other nations should share with them and be equal to them in the blessings of the Messiah. The religion wherein St. Paul had been bred was concerned in no principle more than this, that the rest of the world were all unclean, and never to be united to them, unless they would be circumcised and observe the law of Moses. And therefore, had he not been pressed with undeniable evidence, he would never have consented to this truth, which was so much against the grain of that spirit which possessed him; and which he but once mentioning to his countrymen, they were ready to tear him in pieces[f]. And yet he reports this for a certain truth from the mouth of Jesus himself, who bade him (as he relates this glorious vision to Agrippa, a prince well skilled in the law,) go unto the Gentiles, *to open their eyes,* (as he had done his,) *to turn them from darkness unto light, and from the power of Satan unto God, that they might receive forgiveness of sins, and inheritance among them that are sanctified by faith in him*[g]. And accordingly he went and preached everywhere, in obedience to this heavenly vision, the comfortable doctrine of the resurrection and eternal life to us Gentiles as well as others: *witnessing both to small and great that,* as the prophets had foretold, *Christ ought to suffer, and should be the first that should rise from the dead, and show light unto the*

[f] Acts xxii. 21, 22. [g] Acts xxvi. 17, 18.

people (of *Israel*, that is,) *and to the Gentiles*[h]. By *light* in the holy language is meant the gladsome discovery of God's good-will and pleasure. For as by *darkness* it expresses ignorance, sorrow, and heaviness; so by its opposite, knowledge, joy, and cheerfulness. And *light*, which we have by Christ's sufferings and rising from the dead, can be nothing else but the blessed hope of immortality. This, St. John tells us, is the *light* of mankind: (*In him was life, and the life was the light of men*[i]; that is, their singular comfort and satisfaction, which makes their life not to be irksome to them:) and with this *light* St. Paul endeavoured to fill the world, that they might all know how much they were indebted to Jesus, *who brought life and immortality to light by his gospel*[j].

And can it enter into any man's thoughts that he would have set himself to preach this doctrine of happiness to us, (which his own people so abhorred we should partake of,) if God the *Word* had not made him infallibly assured of it? Nay, how could he have preached it so long, unless, as he there speaks, he had *obtained help of God*; who countenanced his preaching, and approved this testimony of his concerning his Son Jesus, by the mighty power of the Holy Ghost? He himself also testified the strong belief he had of the resurrection, and of the glory that shall be revealed, by his labouring so abundantly as he did in the work of the Lord; to whom he was desirous to express an extraordinary affection, because his grace and love had so abounded towards him. He thought he could never in the least requite his kindness, and therefore would not gain one farthing, not so much as a bit of bread, by this preaching; but, though he might have lived by the gospel, chose rather to work with his own hands to support himself and those that were with him, that he might win the more souls to his Master, by making religion without charge to them. A great argument of his zeal to serve his Lord, and promote his honour, and of his firm belief of immortal life, where he desired only to have his services rewarded. Which is excellently expressed by the forenamed Asterius, when he says, that he refused so small a recompense of his infinite labours as a daily provision for his body, which was so often

[h] Acts xxvi. 22, 23. [i] John i. 4. [j] [2 Tim. i. 10.]

beaten and bruised, ἵνα μηδὲν ἐπὶ γῆς λαβὼν, πάντα ἐν τοῖς οὐρανοῖς ἀποθήσῃ, 'that, receiving nothing upon earth, he might lay up all in heaven[k].'

IV. And therefore you may observe that his service was so acceptable to our Saviour, that he gratified him here in this world above our mortal condition; and to give him an earnest or pledge of the good things to come, and the honour should be done him there, he did him the favour to transport him into the third heaven, and another time into Paradise, where he saw visions and heard words too glorious for him to utter or us to understand in this present state[l]. This was a further confirmation which the eternal *Word* gave of his power to give *eternal life*, and of his intentions to take us up unto himself. For he was carried thus above the clouds by the power and favour of Jesus; who hereby bare witness to himself how glorious he is, and how able to advance his faithful disciples to the same height of heavenly felicity: for he says it was *a man in Christ*, one who, by the happiness of belonging to him, had this noble privilege bestowed on him: and he gives this as an instance of the visions and revelations τοῦ Κυρίου, *of the Lord*[m], which is the title of Jesus most frequently in the New Testament, who *is Lord of all*[n]. He snatched him up into the heavens: he transported him, nobody knows how, to the celestial habitations; and either by a πρόοδος, ἢ ἀνάβασις, ἢ ἀνάληψις, (as St. Greg. Naz. distinguishes them[o],) 'a rapture of mind in the body, or the ascension of his mind quite out of the body, or the assumption of both for a time into those regions above,' he let him see strange sights, and hear such words as are not to be spoken with our tongues. Which was a very full demonstration of the majesty of our blessed Saviour, and of his ability to translate us to those heavenly places, and of his purposes likewise to make us at last so happy.

Behold here the glory of the Christian religion, whose Author is so highly exalted, that he exalts this minister of his far above the greatest persons in former times. "The translation of Elias (as the often named Asterius speaks[p]) out of this

[k] [Col. 164 C.]
[l] 2 Cor. xii. 3, 4.
[m] Ver. 1. [n] Acts x. 36.
[o] Orat. ii. περὶ Θεολογίας, p. 550. [ed. Ben. Orat. 28. § 20. tom. i. p. 510 E.]
[p] Ib. εἰς κορυφαίους Ἀποστόλους, &c. [coll. 164, 5.]

world wherein we are, is everywhere celebrated as a wonder: but μέχρι πόσου ἔφθασε, 'how far he went,' no revelation hath explained. Perhaps he was not carried very high above the earth by that power which lifted him up to the place which was destined for his habitation. But the translation of St. Paul was far more illustrious and famous; the very place being noted to which he was carried: and that no inferior one, but almost half way to the highest heavens of all. Let the Hebrews hereafter cease to pride themselves in the honour that was done to Moses, who alone went up to the top of mount Sinai, and was in the midst of the clouds and darkness which appeared there. My Paul, instead of a mountain, ascended into heaven, and instead of a cloud, was carried beyond the air that is above the clouds. And very fitly; for it became a man of Christ to outstrip Moses as much as the old law was excelled by the gospel that St. Paul preached:" which he calls the *mystery hid from ages and generations, but now made manifest to the saints,* (or Christians,) *to whom God would make known what is the riches of the glory of this mystery among the Gentiles, which is Christ in us, the hope of glory*[q].

III.

And here now let us leave the history of this great man, and pass to the third testimony which the *Word* gave of this truth, to St. John. Who, as he is the only person that (after the other evangelists had set down the genealogy of our Lord according to the flesh) expounds τὴν ἄναρχον ὕπαρξιν τοῦ Θεοῦ λόγου, as Proclus speaks[r], 'the eternal subsistence without any beginning of God the *Word*,' and his generation of the Father before all worlds; so he hath gathered here together, more clearly than any of the rest, all the evidences and grounds of the Christian faith; and also received the most full and pregnant demonstrations of what he hath particularly recorded concerning *eternal life in the Son of God.* For when our blessed Lord, (the *Word* made flesh,) whom he beheld ascending into heaven, appeared to him from thence in a most glorious manner, you may observe,

I. That he sufficiently declares his power to do what he pleases, by taking to himself that very name and title whereby

[q] Col. i. 26, 27. [r] Εἰς τὸ ἅγιον Πάσχα. [col. 432 D.]

God the Father Almighty sometimes revealed himself to the prophets. You read in Isaiah, xli. 4, xliv. 6, the Lord, the King of Israel, and his Redeemer, saith, *I am the first and the last:* which is the very same with those words, *I am Alpha and Omega, the beginning and the ending, saith the Lord*[s], &c.; those two being the names of the *first* and the *last* letters in the Greek alphabet, as A and Z are the first and last in our Christ-cross-row[t]. Now if you look further into this book of the Revelation, you will find that in this very style our blessed Lord speaks of himself. In the very beginning of the visions there recorded, St. John heard one call to him with a loud voice, as of a trumpet, saying, *I am Alpha and Omega, the first and the last*[u]; and turning about to see who it was that spake to him, our Saviour appeared in the form and shape of a king and priest shining in glory, as you read, ver. 12, 13, &c. And thus he concludes his revelation as he had begun, *I am Alpha and Omega, the beginning and the end, &c. I Jesus have sent my angel to testify unto you these things in the churches*[v]. Which is a demonstrative argument that *eternal life* is in him, and that he wants no power to effect any thing he hath promised; being equal to the Father Almighty, whose name else he would not have assumed.

II. And if we examine the sense and meaning of this name, we shall still be further convinced that he will undoubtedly employ his power to bestow upon us that eternal life which is in him. For when the Almighty calls himself *the first and the last*, he either declares that he is the *Eternal*, who gave being to all things, and remains after they are all dead and gone; or else, (as Œcolampadius and Calvin understand those words in Isaiah,) that he is the *Immutable*, from first to last constant to himself and his promises. Which is the gloss of R. Solomon upon the words; who refers them to the help and assistance which God would give to the last as well as the first of Abraham's children. What he had been to Israel, the same he would still be. He had at the first taken them to be his people; and therefore in the latter days he would still own them, and show his special affection to them.

[s] Rev. i. 8.

[t] ['Christ-cross,' the alphabet;—see Halliwell's Dictionary of archaic words.] [u] Rev. i. 11. [v] xxii. 13, 16.

I see no reason why these two expositions should be thought so inconsistent as to exclude one the other; when they may both be very well joined together. And then our Lord intends by the assumption of this title, that St. John and all the Christian churches should look upon him as the eternal God, able to perpetuate his love and mercy towards them world without end; and as alway the same unchangeable wisdom and goodness, whose mind and will is no more alterable than his power, but remains as firmly fixed as God the Father Almighty doth. So that look what God the Father now is or hath been, or what himself hath ever been to the body of his church; the same he will still continue immutably to our endless happiness. If God the Father was, and is, and will be the *Alpha* or beginning; the same is he likewise. All things come from him to his church, of which he is the founder; by him it subsists and continues; and he hath such a creative power in him, that he can give all blessings, even *life everlasting*, to it. For though we die, yet he is the *Omega*, who remains still in being after all the world is buried in its ruins; and therefore can quicken our dust and ashes, and gather them up to himself, and make them glorious. God the Father raised him from the dead, and gave him glory: and therefore, seeing he hath the same power, (as appears by these titles), he can do as much for us, and give us a glorious resurrection. In this God the Father faithfully fulfilled the promises he had made him, of *glorifying him with him with himself:* and therefore we may be confident he will be as true to us, and make good all the promises he hath left us for our encouragement in his obedience; because he is perfectly such as his Father is.

And, to come a little nearer to that interpretation which rabbi Solomon gives of the words of the prophet, (where this expression is first used,) our Lord would have us think that, as God the Father Almighty, having begun to show mercy and favour to Israel, would not fail to go on and continue the same kindness to the end: so he being likewise the *Alpha*, having begun, that is, to raise himself a church, and to do great things for it, even to die and purchase it with his blood, would undoubtedly be the *Omega;* finish, that is, his own work, and bring that of which he had laid the foundation to an happy conclusion; never ceasing his kindness till he had perfected

his saints in that life he had begun to bestow upon them. Or, as he began in this world to raise men from the dead, to bestow upon them other great benefits, to make them very precious promises of greater favours, and to seal them with his blood; so he would have them rest assured he would continue to the end to do them good, and at the last to raise all his faithful servants from the dead, and take them up to live with himself; and in the mean time perform every other promise he had made, for their present satisfaction and support in this troublesome world. As he died for them, so he would have them make account he lived for them; because he is always the same, at last the very same that he was at first: and therefore *since he lives, they might expect to live also.*

III. But he did not leave them merely to draw these inferences themselves from that great name whereby he now made himself known to St. John; but immediately after he had told who he was, he more clearly and particularly declares this very thing, that he hath *life in himself.* For you read that St. John, beholding him in such glory, with a countenance as bright as the sun when it shineth in its strength, (which was a sight too strong for our weak eyes to look upon,) *fell at his feet as one dead*[u]. He was as much astonished at his presence, though he knew Jesus loved him, as St. Paul was while he was a persecutor of him. Which shows that our Lord appeared now in a most amazing glory; too splendid for the capacity of his best friends to endure long, without the danger of ceasing to be men. For so far were those words which our Lord spake from giving him life, that, like to those who heretofore beheld the glory of God, he was more astonished at what he saw than comforted with what he heard; and thought, it is probable, he should die presently and give up the ghost. But in this trembling fit Jesus was pleased graciously to approach, and, laying his right hand on him, bade him *not fear*, nor let that majesty of God which he beheld in him cast him into such a great consternation. "It is true indeed, (says he), *I am the first and the last*[x], as I said before; that is, am invested with all the power of God, bearing his name and authority: but there is so much comfort in this, that it ought

[u] Rev. i. 16. [x] Ver. 17.

rather to have transported thee with joy than struck thee with terror. For (as it there follows), I, who call myself *Alpha* and *Omega*, the first and last, *am he that liveth and was dead* [x]; I the very same person who loved thee and the rest of mankind so well as to die for you, and never made use of my power to your hurt; am risen from the dead; and after all my sufferings (such as you must endure for my sake) am alive, as thou seest, and in a far better condition than I was before, when thou wast not thus afraid of me. Though in my first attempt to raise a church I suffered death, and laid the foundation of it in my blood; yet it is apparent I have overcome death, and now live in greater splendour than ever."

If our Lord had stopped here, and said no more, this had been sufficient to convince him of his power to present to himself a glorious church; and, from the lowest and most afflicted condition, to raise it to the greatest honour here, and to eternal glory in the other world. But he proceeds, for the stronger confirmation of his faith, and says, "*Behold*, more than this, *I am alive for evermore.* I have *eternal life*, and can never lose this power; and therefore thou mayest believe me when I say that I am the *Omega*, whom thou knowest to be the *Alpha;* for I can perfect what I have undertaken, and bring to an happy issue all the good I have begun to work for you. The latest posterity shall find that I am alive, and able to promote them to everlasting bliss. Fear not, these words are all true, and therefore I conclude them with an *Amen*, (wherewith I was wont, thou mayest remember, to confirm my sayings,) that thou mayest rest assured I now say nothing but the certain indubitable truth, when I tell thee, *I am he that was dead, and now am alive*, and that *I live for evermore.* Πῶς οὖν οἰόν τέ σε παθεῖν τι κακὸν ἐκ τῆς ἐπιφανείας μου; (as Andreas Cæsariensis conceives his meaning [y],) 'How canst thou imagine then that thou art in danger to suffer any harm by my appearing to thee,' since the power which thou seest me have is to give life, not death, unto my servants? I never used, thou mayest remember, to kill men, but to save them; and therefore thus, thou mayest be confident, I will still employ my omnipotent power, for I am *Alpha* and *Omega*, the same

[x] Rev. i. 18. [y] [Ad calc. Œcum. tom. ii. p. 660 C.]

at last that I was at first: I am come, that you might have life. and that you might have it more abundantly.

"And indeed, as he still goes on, *I have the keys of hell and of death;* or (as we render the word Ἅιδης, here translated *hell,* in 1 Cor. xv. 55) *the keys of the grave and of death.* I can open the graves, as I did at my death, and can loose the bands of death, as I did at my resurrection. I can bring you out of that dark estate where nobody sees you, and restore you to life again; nay, raise you to that light wherein thou beholdest me to shine."

And here again it is observable, that our Saviour takes to himself that very power which is ascribed to Almighty God by Hannah, who says in her song, *The Lord killeth, and maketh alive: he bringeth down to the grave, and bringeth up*[z]. Whereby he would suggest to St. John, that all things are committed to his trust, and are in his power: (for that is frequently denoted in the holy language by *keys,* the badge of a steward's authority and power in a family:) and therefore it is not too hard for him to overcome the great conqueror of all men, to open the prison doors that have been so long shut and fast locked, to loose the chains of death, and overthrow him quite who hath the power of it, that is, the devil. But this he would have us steadfastly believe, and therefore immediately bids him (not lie as a man dead, but get up and) *write the things that thou hast seen*[a]. This is, "Let my church know that I am alive, and that I bear the same affection to them that I ever had. Send them this comfort from me, that I not only live, but always live, and have all power committed to me, even over the grave and death: so that if any man lose his life for me, I can give it him again with such an increase of dignity and glory as thou seest me enjoy."

And we must needs confess that there is an exceeding great comfort in this assurance, which he gave thus in his own person and with his own mouth to this holy apostle; who *knows,* as he speaks in another case, *that he saith true*[b]. For hereby we rest satisfied of one part of the record which is to be proved, that *life is in Jesus;* and see moreover much reason to believe the other part, that *he intends to bestow it on us.*

[z] 1 Sam. ii. 6. [a] Rev. i. 19. [b] John xix. 35.

IV. But for a fuller evidence of that, you may consider, in the last place, that this *Word* of God gave frequent testimonies of it to St. John in the following letters to the seven churches of Asia: where they are so obvious, that I may leave it to the most careless hand to gather them. To one he saith. *I will give to him that overcometh to eat of the tree of life, which is in the midst of the paradise of God*[c]. To another, *I will give him a crown of life;* and, *he shall not be hurt of the second death*[d]. To a third, *I will give him the white stone,* &c., a certain knowledge and assurance, i. e. (as I hope to show in another place) of the promised reward[e]. To another, *He shall be clothed in white raiment; and I will not blot out his name out of the book of life, but I will confess his name before my Father, and before his angels*[f]. And, to name no more, he promises to grant to him that overcometh *to sit down with him in his throne*[g]. Which, though it may have some respect to the high place and dignity he should enjoy in the church in this world, yet had not its full completion but in the other life; where he will crown the fidelity of all victorious souls with the greatest glory and honour.

How can we doubt of it when we hear such express promises of immortal bliss so oft repeated from the mouth of the *Word* of God himself, after he went to heaven? Great is our assurance, great is the confidence we may take from such a record as this, if we be in the number of those that *overcome;* remain constant, that is, and fixed in our Christian resolution, notwithstanding any assaults that are made upon us, either by the good or bad things of this world, to tempt us to revolt from our duty. For St. John saw and heard these things from the Lord Jesus himself, upon his own day, (the day of his resurrection from the dead,) and in a glory so bright, that it was an emblem of the happiness he will bestow upon us; and with such earnest asseverations of their truth and certainty as are sufficient to awake the dullest and most lethargic souls to attend to what he says. For thus he begins his letter to the church of Laodicea, who were grown strangely chill and indevout: *These things saith the Amen, the faithful and true Witness, the beginning of the creation of God*[h].

[c] Rev. ii. 7. [d] Ver. 10, 11. [e] Ver. 17. [f] iii. 5. [g] Ver. 21. [h] iii. 14.

By the name of *Amen*, which he gives himself, he would have them understand, that by him all the promises made to the church shall undoubtedly be fulfilled, according to that of St. Paul, *in him all the promises of God are yea, and in him Amen*[i]. "He may be believed, for he is a witness who affirms and testifies nothing but the very truth, which can never fail; because he is the efficient cause of all things, by whom they were at first created, and by whom mankind is now repaired; and therefore is the Head of all creatures, especially of all Christians, who shall rise again from the dead to immortal life." So I expound the last words, *the beginning of the creation of God*, as Andreas Cæsariensis doth[k]; who takes in both senses the word Ἀρχὴ, (as I have of the word *creation*,) which signifies not only *principium*, the 'beginning or original,' but *principatum*, the 'principality or dominion' which the Son of God hath over all creatures, of which he is the Author. What may we not expect from so great a Prince, who hath such an absolute command over all things? And why should we doubt of his sovereignty, who appeared in such an amazing splendour to St. John, and proclaimed in these and other such like titles the supereminent glory of his Majesty? Or why should we question his truth, who had approved himself so many ways *the true and faithful Witness;* especially by sending the Holy Ghost (as you shall hear presently) to bear witness to him, according to his promise? We ought to rely upon his word, and to fear nothing, but lest we should reject or distrust the testimony of a Person so great and so just; whose power appeared, from his very first entrance into the world, to be so far transcending all creatures, that the apostles might see, before his ascension to the glory wherein St. John beheld him, that as he had the *words of eternal life*, so he had that *life in himself* which, in due time, he would bestow upon them.

"For though he had all the passions of a man, yet he had all the perfections likewise of God; that none might be so profanely contumelious as to contemn his deity because he took upon him the grossness of our humanity. He was born of a

[i] 2 Cor. i. 20.

[k] [Ἡ ἀρχὴ τῆς κτίσεως τοῦ Θεοῦ· ἀντὶ τοῦ ἡ βασιλεία καὶ ἡ ἀρχὴ πάντων ὡς κτισμάτων δεσπόζουσα,—ad calc. Œcum. tom. ii. p. 684 C.]

woman, but she a virgin: that was human, this divine. He was wrapt in swaddling clothes when he was an infant; but shaked off the clothes that wrapt him in the sepulchre when he was dead. He was laid in a manger; but then glorified by angels, pointed to by a star, and worshipped by the wise men. He was driven into Egypt; but there drove away the errors of the Egyptians. The Jews saw no beauty in him; but he shone upon the mountain brighter than the sun, prefiguring the glory to which he should ascend. He was baptized and tempted, as man; but he took away the sins of the world, and got the victory, as God. He was hungry, but fed many thousands, and is himself the heavenly bread which giveth life. He was thirsty; but gave the waters of life, and made rivers of living waters flow from those that believed on him. He was called a Samaritan, and they said he had a devil; but he put devils to flight, and tumbled whole legions of them into the deep, and made the prince of devils fall like lightning from heaven. He was sold for thirty pieces of silver; but purchased the whole world with the great price of his own blood. He was led as a sheep to the slaughter; but was the Shepherd of Israel, and now is of all the world. He was dumb as a lamb before the shearers; but is the *Word* preached by the voice of one crying in the wilderness. He was wounded and bruised; but healed every sickness and all manner of disease. He was lifted up on the tree, and there fixed; but restored us to the tree of life, and saved the thief who was crucified with him. He laid down his life; but had power to take it again, and the veil rent, the rocks were cleft, and the dead were raised. He died; but he gives life, and by death extinguished death. He was buried; but rose again out of the grave. He went down into hell; but he brought up souls with him, and ascended into heaven, and will come again to judge the quick and the dead, and to examine all such discourses as detract from his glory[1]."

O my soul, for ever praise him, and let thy heart rejoice in his holy name. Love him as thy life; confide in his word; depend on his power; and expect from him the blessing of

[1] Greg. Nazianz. Orat. xxxv. p. 575. [ed. Ben. Orat. xxix. § 19, 20. tom. i. pp. 537, 8.]

eternal life. For he is the *Amen, the faithful and true Witness,* who cannot lie; *the beginning of the creation of God,* whom all creatures without a voice confess to be their Lord. "The heavens cry, that it was God who bowed them, and came down to be a man for our sakes. The sun cries, it was my Lord who was crucified in the flesh; at the light of whose divinity I was afraid, and withdrew my beams. The earth cries, it was he that formed me, who suffered; which made me quake and tremble at the horrid fact. The sea cries, he was not my fellow-servant who walked, with one of his disciples, upon my back. The temple cries, he that was worshipped here is now blasphemed; and therefore I rend my garments. Nay, hell cries, he was not a mere man who descended hither; for whom I received as a captive, I found to be the omnipotent God. And if we ask the heavenly powers, and desire the angels and archangels and the whole host of heaven to tell us, who was he that appeared on earth, and was crucified in the flesh? they will all answer aloud, in the words of the prophet David, The Lord, the God of hosts, he is the King of glory. To him be glory and dominion for ever and ever. Amen [m]."

CHAP. VIII.

Concerning the testimony of the Holy Ghost, the third witness in heaven.

Now I proceed to examine the testimony which the third witness in heaven gave concerning this future state; which is the HOLY GHOST, the Third Person in the Blessed Trinity: who openly assures us, by as many ways and by the same means, that we *have eternal life in Christ Jesus,* as he did that Jesus is the *Son of God.* And, that I may not be tedious in a business wherein we have already received such satisfaction, let us take but a small taste of those *three* testimonies of the Holy Ghost, which I alleged in the former treatise.

[m] Proclus, Orat. xiii. *εἰς τὸ ἅγιον Πάσχα.* [Auct. nov. Biblioth. patr. Græco-Lat. per Combefim. tom. i. col. 425 E.]

I.

And first, you know that there was a visible appearance of the Holy Ghost at our Saviour's baptism: when the divine glory came down from heaven, and rested on him in the sight of John the Baptist; whereby he was persuaded that this was the Messiah, the King of Israel. And if we carefully inquire into it, we shall find it to have been as clear a witness, that it is in his power and in his purpose to give *eternal life* to all his faithful subjects.

I. For first, the very end of its appearing was to invest him with the highest office and dignity; which from this time he took upon him and exercised, whereas before he had lived as a private person. So you read that he was *anointed with the Holy Ghost and with power*[n]. Which being a ceremony whereby kings are created, we are to understand that by the coming down of the *Holy Ghost* he was appointed our Lord and Sovereign: one part of whose office is, to bestow rewards on those that do him good and faithful service. Now *his kingdom not being of this world*, as he professed, and as was apparent by his life and death; and yet he constantly asserting that he was a king, and exercising several acts of royal authority, as I have formerly proved; we must conclude, that by this *unction* he was designed to be a king in the heavens: where he disposes of all places and preferments, and will promote all his loyal subjects to the greatest honours and dignities.

There is no reason to doubt of it, for the *glory of the Lord* which at his baptism descended on him, so as it had never done on any man, was the *seal*, or if you will, the *crown* of God upon him; which marked him to be the Lord of glory, from whom we may expect the blessing of eternal life. The very opening also of the heavens, at the descent of the Holy Ghost upon him, signified as much, (as St. Chrysostom thinks,) and was a plain declaration of the exceeding great favour of God towards us. "Who now opened to us," as he speaks[o], τὰς πύλας τὰς ἄνω, "those gates above; and sent the Spirit from thence to call us to our celestial country: and not simply to

[n] Acts x. 38. [o] Homil. xii. in Matthæum. [§ 3. tom. vii. p. 165 A.]

callus, but with the greatest prerogative: for he hath not made us angels and archangels, but making us the sons of God and his beloved sons, so he draws us to that heavenly portion."

II. Which we may with the greater confidence expect, because the *Holy Ghost*, as I observed heretofore, not only came down upon him, but *rested*, or took up its abode in him. It did not only overshadow him, as the glory of the Lord did the blessed Virgin; but descending on him, settled itself in him as its habitation: insomuch that every day one might see the glory of the Lord shining in him. Thus John Baptist, who was a careful observer of it, relates in John i. 32, 33, where he twice takes notice of the *abiding* and the *resting* of the Holy Ghost with him. In which Isaac Abarbinel himself [o], a known enemy to Jesus, confesses the excellency of Christ's prophecy consists: this being one of the ten privileges which the Messiah, he saith, shall be endued withal, that *the Spirit of the Lord shall rest upon him* [p]. So it did upon our Saviour, (as an undoubted prophet testified,) in whom all the *fulness of the Godhead dwelt bodily:* and therefore he must needs *have life in himself;* and out of his fulness, as St. John speaks, we may expect to *receive grace for grace.*

For he that bade John baptize, you may further consider, told him that this person who had the Holy Ghost not only *descending* on him, but *residing* in him, was he that should baptize men with the Holy Ghost: be a king, that is, in the heavens, and have all power committed to him; as he would demonstrate by sending the Holy Ghost upon others, as now it came upon him. And till that time came, it was as visible as the light wherein the Holy Ghost appeared, that it did inhabit in him, by the constant sensible effects of his divine power everywhere. St. Luke, as I observed in the First Part, remembers how he returned immediately from Jordan, where he was baptized, *full of the Holy Ghost* [q]: as was manifest, not only from a number of miraculous operations, but from the no less wonderful wisdom whereby he spake, and opened the ancient oracles of God. For to this end also he was anointed, (and herein he exercised the authority of a king), as the very

[o] In Isaiah xi. [vide Vitringam in loc. tom. i. p. 300, 1.]
[p] Is. xi. 2. [q] Luke iv. 1.

first place of the prophetical books which he expounded clearly tells us[r]. Where you may note, that the great business for which he was *anointed by the Spirit* was, *to preach the acceptable year of the Lord:* the time of grace, that is, wherein the good-will and pleasure of God was shown to the world; which consists principally in giving remission of sins and eternal life. This he came to proclaim and publish with the power of the Holy Ghost; having all those divine gifts mentioned in Isaiah xi. to qualify him for this high office: four of which belong to the mind, (and was well represented by that luminous body which came down upon him at his baptism,) and one to the will, and another to the power of action; viz. *wisdom, understanding, counsel, might, knowledge,* and *the fear of the Lord.* He was able on all occasions to speak most divinely, to teach as one that had authority, to evade all the secret plots which his adversaries had upon him, to search into their very hearts and desires, to show the straight way to that bliss which he preached, to foil all the power of the enemy, and to raise even the dead to life again. Which were evident demonstrations that the *Spirit of the Lord rested on him,* and made him the greatest prophet that ever was; not only the preacher, but the giver of *eternal life.*

III. For as by this power of the Holy Ghost it was manifest he *had life in himself;* so God's intention to give this life to us was apparent from the manner of its descent; which is said to have been *like a dove.* The phrase indeed is dubious, and may signify only, that this glorious body which came down from heaven was, in its descent or falling, like the coming down of a dove with its wings spread abroad. Yet since St. Luke saith that it came *in a bodily shape;* and the church, though the words do not necessarily enforce it, hath thus understood it; we may most probably conclude, the word *like* hath relation not only to the *coming down,* but to the *dove* itself: telling us, that the form or figure of this celestial glory which now appeared carried the resemblance of that creature.

Now to think that this form was assumed without any design at all, would be very contrary to common reason: which leads us rather to conceive, that God would show, at the first en-

[r] Luke iv. 18, 19.

trance of our Saviour upon his office, by this known emblem of meekness and love, what great favour and kindness he intended to show to mankind; and with what a tender spirit of gentleness and sweetness our Lord should exercise the ministry committed to him towards the *poor*, and the *broken in heart*, and the miserable *captives*, to whom he preached the *acceptable year of the Lord*. Or else, as St. Chrysostom's words are[s], "he remembers us hereby of the old history." For the whole world being once shipwrecked, and human kind being in great danger to be totally lost, this creature appeared with an olive-branch in her mouth, and brought them glad tidings that the tempest was over, and that there was now an universal calm. Ἅπερ πάντα τῶν μελλόντων τύπος ἦν, "All which things were a type and figure of what was to come. For now when the affairs of mankind were in a worse condition, and they were all in danger of a sorer punishment, the unspeakable grace of God in our Saviour steps in for our rescue. And therefore a dove appeared again, not bringing an olive branch, but showing us our deliverer from all evil, and administering unto us good hopes. For it doth not bring merely one man and his family out of danger, but appeared to lead all the world to heaven; and, instead of an olive branch, brought the adoption of sons to all mankind. And where the dignity of this adoption is, there is the destruction of all evil things, and the gift of all things that are good." To the same purpose speaks Theophylact[t], who contracts his sense in fewer words. "As the dove brought to Noah the news that the waters of the flood were gone, so now the Holy Ghost brought the joyful news of the doing away of sin. There was an olive branch, and here was the mercy of God."

And thus John Baptist understood it, who having seen this sight cried out, *Behold the Lamb of God, that taketh away the sins of the world*[u]; that is, death the punishment of sin; and consequently restores us to immortal life. This, he thought, declared God to be reconciled; and looked upon it as a token that the heavens had laid aside their displeasure, and would be at peace with the sinful sons of men. The windows, you know, of heaven were opened in the old world; but dark

[s] [§. 3. p. 164 A.] [t] [In loc. tom. i. p. 296 B.] [u] John i. 29, 30, &c.

and pitchy clouds were all that appeared, which poured down nothing but a flood of rain upon mankind: whereas now, quite contrary, when the heavens were opened again, there was no dismal sight presented itself, but only a pure light and glorious brightness shone from the face of God. And the Holy Ghost in the form of a dove appeared, not like that of Noah after the deluge had swept all mankind (very few excepted) from the face of the earth, but to give notice to the world that God would not take such vengeance upon men for their wickedness, but be graciously reconciled to them, by saving them from death, and giving them the blessing of eternal life. One might well gather as much from this sight, especially when there was such an olive branch of peace (if I may so call it) in the mouth of this dove, as that voice from heaven which came along with it, saying, *This is my beloved Son, in whom I am well pleased.* One of these illustrates and explains the other: and both of them tell us that the heavens now look upon us with a serene countenance, and that we are no longer shut out of them, but God is so well satisfied, that he will admit us into those celestial habitations.

II.

This was further declared afterward, when the apostles, according to his promise, were on the day of Pentecost *baptized with the Holy Ghost:* whereby they were sent by him, as he was by the Father. Then the heavens poured down such a large shower of the divine grace, as presently overflowed the world with a comfortable sense of Eternal Life. This was one great end of the coming of the Holy Ghost, which then *witnessed* to our Saviour, and openly showed him to the world as the *Prince of life*[x].

For, (1) it was a plain demonstration that he whom the Jews had murdered was alive from the dead, and had not lost his power, which was so eminent in him all the while he was on earth, to do good, and bestow benefits upon mankind. And (2) the greatness of the benefit shows that he was greater in power than ever, having ennobled all his servants, and raised men of the lowest condition to the highest dignities, by be-

[x] Acts iii. 15.

stowing on them the gift of the Holy Ghost. It was his gift, as he foretold in his lifetime, when he said, *I will send the Comforter from the Father*[y]; and, *He shall receive of mine and show it unto you*[z]. And therefore the Holy Ghost declared his greatness and power over all, as St. Peter discourses in the very first sermon he preached after our Saviour's resurrection on the day of Pentecost[a]: where he tells the Jews, that what they saw and heard, and were amazed at, was shed forth and poured on them by Jesus, who had now received the promise of the Holy Ghost. And *therefore*, says he, *let all the house of Israel know assuredly that God hath made that Jesus whom ye crucified both Lord and Christ*[b]. Which is as much as to say, You ought to look upon this as an undoubted argument that he is Lord of all things, (the Christ or King whom God the Father hath appointed,) because he hath sent such royal gifts to his servants as none but the Lord of the world could possibly bestow.

And by the way we may take notice, that the better sort of the Jews themselves expect the Messiah should bring such grace to men. For Abarbinel, in the place forementioned, acknowledging miraculous works to be a note whereby the Messiah shall be known, reckons this for one of them, *the effusion of the Spirit of God* spoken of by the prophet Joel. Our Lord therefore sending this down in a plentiful manner on the day of Pentecost, thereby manifested, if they would have seen it, that he had the mark of their King upon him; and indeed could do that which they all confess is the work of God alone, who only can pour out the gifts which the prophet there promises. There is no reason to question the power of such a King as this to do what he pleases; even to prefer his subjects to his heavenly kingdom. They may be raised, when he thinks good, to reign with him above, as now they began to do upon the earth. It depends upon his will alone to exalt them to that very place, from whence this mighty power of the Holy Ghost came down upon them.

But that we may be satisfied the Holy Ghost was an express witness of his being the *Prince of life*, (a King that hath life in himself,) *a Prince and a Saviour*, (as it is Acts v. 31,) who

[y] John xv. 26. [z] xvi. 14, 15. [a] Acts ii. 33. [b] Ver. 36.

can deliver men from the oppression of all their enemies, the greatest of which is death, you may consider (3) that the miraculous change which was wrought on a sudden in the minds of very ignorant men, is an evident argument what he can do for our souls in the other world. He inspired them with such understanding by the power of the Holy Ghost, that the greatest doctors in Israel were not able to resist the wisdom whereby they spake. They understood clearly all the ancient prophecies: there was no veil or cloud any longer upon them, but the Holy Ghost made them see the whole mystery which was wrapt up in them. It revealed all types, explained all figures, led them into the sanctuary and most holy place; showed them the true meaning of the mercy seat, and laid all those things, which did but obscurely point at eternal life, so open and naked, that none could choose but see, if he did not shut his eyes, they were not the same men that they had been but just before, and were made thus learned without any human helps of instruction. A convincing argument of his power to raise our minds when we depart this world, and have not the clouds of this body before our eyes, to as great a pitch of knowledge as I discoursed of in the beginning of this treatise. And the suddenness of this change was as clear an argument that he can do it without difficulty, and that there is not so great a distance between this present state and that which we expect, but he can presently translate us to it.

And (4) this knowledge, you may consider further, being accompanied with a mighty power, whereby the Holy Ghost enabled them not only to give eyes to the blind, feet to the lame, health to the sick, but life also to the dead, (as was very well known in those days,) was an undoubted testimony, that he from whom it came is able also to *change these vile bodies, and make them like to his own most glorious body.* For it is visible he hath a power whereby he can *subdue all things to himself.* To take away life you may think is no such great matter, that we should take any notice of it; yet to do even this with a word for lying to the Holy Ghost, was an argument of a mighty power residing inthe apostles. And when Abarbinel speaks of the power of the Messiah to work miracles, from that prophecy of Isaiah xi. he alleges these words to prove it: *He shall smite the earth with the rod of his mouth,*

and with the breath of his lips shall he slay the wicked[c]*:* which was never literally fulfilled during our Saviour's stay on earth, (where he did nothing but good to men,) but was made good after he went to heaven by his power in his ministers, who smote that wicked couple mentioned Acts v. without any hands, merely with the breath of their mouth. What shall we think then of their restoring men to life after they were dead, for which they were more notorious? We cannot but look on this as a great witness of the wonderful power of Jesus in them; and consequently of the life and glory he intended to bestow on sinful dust and ashes. He would not have filled them thus full of his Spirit, if he had not meant thereby to raise their expectations above all that even by its power they at present felt. Had it not been his design to make them hereafter like to God, he would not have preferred them to such a resemblance of his wisdom and power here in this world. They that could raise others from the dead had no reason to doubt of being raised up themselves. When they saw themselves made the conveyers of such great blessings to all mankind, they must needs stand fair, they could not but conclude, for a very large portion of his favour to their own persons.

For the truth is, (5) these gifts which were then given to men proclaimed aloud the marvellous bounty of our Saviour, as well as his power; and would not let them doubt of a far more glorious exercise of it in the other world than they saw and were the instruments of in this. And if any imagine, that though this might be a testimony to *them* of eternal life, yet it is none to *us;* the contrary will soon be evident, if you do but consider, (6) that our Lord having made a promise of eternal life, not only to his apostles, but to all that believe on his name, the *Holy Ghost* puts us in strong hope of it by demonstrating his faithfulness to his word: for the effusion of it was the performance of a promise which he had frequently made when he was with them, both before his death, (*I will pray the Father, and he shall give you another Comforter*[d],) and after his resurrection, *Behold, I send the promise of my Father upon you*[e], &c.: *Being assembled together with them, he*

[c] Isaiah xi. 4. [d] John xiv. 16. [e] Luke xxiv. 49.

commanded them not to depart from Jerusalem, but wait for the promise of the Father, which, said he, you have heard of me: for you shall be baptized with the Holy Ghost not many days hence[t]. And therefore we have great reason to look for the promise of eternal life with much confidence, because he who made it was so faithful and just in fulfilling his former promise at the time appointed: especially since he thereby demonstrated that he hath sufficient power to do for us according to his word: for he who made such an extraordinary change in them on the day of Pentecost, that they were able in an instant to speak all languages, to prophesy, and understand the secret counsels of God, can change us, we need not question, from glory to glory; and at last transform us so perfectly as to make us like to himself.

And I may add, to strengthen this consideration, (7) that our Lord declared he would send the *Holy Ghost* for this very purpose, that they might believe the rest of his holy promises; particularly this great one of *eternal life:* which is the meaning of that which you read in John xiv. 12; where, after he had told them (ver. 9, 10, 11.) that God appeared to them, and showed himself in the works that he did, which demonstrated that *the Father dwelt in him,* and consequently that he would *go and prepare a place for them, and take them up to himself,* he adds these remarkable words; *Verily, verily, I say unto you, He that believeth in me, the works that I do shall he do also; and greater works than these shall he do, because I go unto my Father.* As if he had said, "Mark now what I further declare to you, and rely upon it as a certain truth: the works that I have done are sufficient to convince you; but, for a greater confirmation of your faith that *I am going to the Father,* and am *the Way, the Truth, and the Life,* I tell you, that after I am departed, these wonderful things shall be repeated before the eyes of the world by those that believe on me: nay, some things shall be done which your eyes have not yet seen, *because I go to my Father,* i. e. have power in the heavens, and have reserved something peculiar to be given as a testimony of it, over and above what I have done myself." And that was their speaking with all tongues on a sudden, and

[t] Acts i. 4, 5.

their prophesying; whereby they were enabled to preach to all nations, as he had done to the Jews alone, and work the same wonders among the heathen which he had wrought only in that country. A marvellous evidence this was of the power and glory of Christ to give eternal life; in that being absent he did those things by his apostles which were not performed whilst he was present with them.

And therefore (8) upon this account the *Holy Ghost*, thus given to the apostles and those that believed by their word, is called *the earnest of the inheritance in their hearts, until the redemption of the purchased possession*[g]. It was something given them in hand, before his second appearing for full redemption, to assure them they should as certainly receive all that was behind as they had already received this pawn and pledge of his mighty love.

And indeed we have all much reason to think that he will do very great things for us when he appears in his own person, (as the Holy Ghost assures us he will Acts iii. 19, 20.) since he hath done so much good to the world by the apostles, his deputies, who were men like to ourselves. If his servants brought such blessings to men, then what will the Lord himself bring with him at his coming? If his ministers restored dead men to life again, the Master sure will bestow a life as much excelling that which they restored as he excels his officers. In short, if the people looked so earnestly on two poor fishermen when they had cured a man lame from his mother's womb[h], much more will the Lord of glory draw the eyes of the world to him, by doing astonishing things for his people, *when he shall come* (as the apostle speaks) *to be glorified in his saints, and to be admired in all them that believe*[i]. He will give such a glory to us as will be much for his own credit, and reflect glory on himself. He will not so much consult what is fit for us to receive as what is fit for such a Prince as he to give. He will clothe us with such honour and glory, that it will be an honour to him to have his followers appear in such rich and shining liveries. It will set men into admiration to behold the bounty of his royal favour to them; and much advance the greatness of this Prince to see such subjects attend

[g] 2 Cor. i. 22; Eph. i. 14. [h] Acts iii. 12. [i] 2 Thess. i. 10.

him, the meanest of which are kings. Nor do we strain our fancies, and exalt our hopes above what we can reasonably expect, when we look for such high dignities: for that we shall be admitted into his heavenly court, and be thus sumptuously apparelled, and magnificently entertained by angels to wait upon us, and carry us to him, we are assured by the testimony of the *Holy Ghost;* which clothed poor men here with a power greater than the most absolute monarch on earth ever enjoyed, and enabled them to deal greater and richer gifts to men, yea, to scatter them abroad every day as they passed along the streets, or did but spread their shadow over them, than kings and emperors could do at their coronation, or conquerors at their most magnificent triumphs.

III.

And, as a further proof of this, we must observe once more, that the *Holy Ghost* gave its testimony of the *life* that is in *Jesus*, and shall be given unto us, when it fell down upon the common sort of believers, as it had done upon the apostles; who were not desirous to keep the miraculous gifts of it to themselves alone, but readily communicated them to others. It was a great wonder to hear the apostles speak with tongues and prophesy, to see them cure the lame, and restore the blind to their sight, nay, raise the dead to life only by bidding them live and be well in the name of Jesus; (things which no potentates on earth, as I said before, could bestow, though they were forward to take to themselves the name of gods, and affected divine honours:) but it was a greater wonder to see other illiterate Christians receive the same gifts by the laying on of their hands and invocation of the name of the Lord Jesus, who presently filled them with the *Holy Ghost.*

This was a thing so strange, that they could not but look upon it as a token of the most extraordinary love of God to mankind; from whence they might expect as much happiness as the word *eternal life*, I told you, imports. For, (1) nothing ever discovered the capacity of human souls so much as this effusion of the *Holy Ghost;* which showed how large and wide they are, and how much they can contain, and to what degree of excellence they may be improved and raised, and that on a sudden, by the power of God. This gave them a strong taste

of what was to come; and both made them relish immortal life above all other things, and also put them in hope to attain it, by the favour of that person who had promoted them to such a sight of it in this vast measure of wisdom and love wherewith they were endued. For, (2) it could argue nothing less, they might very well think, than that they, who were such eminent marks of his favour as to have a crown of life and glory set upon their heads in this world, should be raised to far greater honours in the next, when they should be more capable of his kindness, and nearer to himself. And indeed, (3) since hereby he dwelt in them, and they became the *temples of the Holy Ghost*, they might be confident he would not suffer so holy a place to be pulled down but in order to the building of it better. And since the Holy Ghost also (4) wonderfully enlarged their hearts, and made them exceeding desirous as well as instrumental in conveying such exceeding great benefits to others, they could not but look upon it as an undeniable argument of the most bounteous goodness of God, who is far more inclinable to do good than men can be, and more ready to reward our services than we can be to do our work.

And considering moreover (5) the promise he had made of Eternal Life, the gift of the Holy Ghost was a marvellous earnest of it, and a kind of beginning of it in their souls. What! shall an ignorant seaman be made a prophet, and speak with all tongues? a poor tent-maker unlock mysteries, and indite spiritual songs and hymns? a man that yesterday could mend nothing but his nets, now cure a man of a bloody flux, or mend a lame leg? a rude soldier command devils, and storm his strong-holds more easily than a town without walls? Lord, what light is this, might they justly say, which shines in our dungeon! what power is this wherewith we see frail flesh armed! what might which thou hast given to grass and hay! As well may a butterfly think of mounting up to heaven, or a flower attempt to pluck up a cedar, as we poor wretches conceive a thought of effecting such wonderful things. This sure signifies that men are very dear to God, or else he would not thus dwell among them. It may well make us believe there is nothing so great, nothing so glorious promised by Jesus, but he will work it for us; having already transformed us into such

noble creatures. As Manoah's wife said to him, *If the Lord were pleased to kill us, he would not have received a burnt-offering and a meat-offering at our hands, neither would he have showed us such things as these*[k]: so might they in this case say, and with greater advantage than she, If the Lord would let us still remain under the power of death, he would not have *given* such gifts into our hands, (for that is more than to *receive* the poor oblations we make to him,) nor would he have revealed such secrets to us. He would not have sent us the spirit of wisdom and knowledge, nor raised us to the degree of prophecy, nor put new tongues into our mouths to declare his wonderful works, nor made all diseases submit to our word. All which gifts, with divers others, they had reason to look upon as the *earnest of the Spirit*, and the *seal* of the Holy Ghost, whereby they had an assurance given them (as I hope to show elsewhere) of the everlasting inheritance which Jesus hath promised in the heavens. For they demonstrated that he who had power thus to alter and advance mean men, and to make them *stuporem mundi*, the 'wonder and amazement of the world,' could also give that *life* which he had promised, by that very power which they felt already working in them.

And they also made it evident (6) that he would bestow it. For there is no more reason that he should thus bestow the Holy Ghost at present, than that he should hereafter give us *eternal life*. His faithful promise is the security for both; our hopes are built upon that sure foundation. If there be any difference between the ground there is for one more than the other, the advantage lies on the side of the hope of *eternal life*. Which there is more reason now that he should give us than there was for giving the Holy Ghost; even because he hath already done so much for his church: and there is more reason we should expect it; because, as I said before, we have seen a remarkable instance of his fidelity, in pouring out such *rivers of living water*, when he sent the Spirit which he promised.

And here it comes to my mind that another wonder, which Abarbinel[l] says the Messiah shall work at his coming, is a miracle like that of dividing the Red sea when Israel came out of

[k] Judg. xiii. 23. [l] In Is. xi. [vide Vitringam in loc. tom. i. p. 357.]

Egypt. Which he endeavours to prove from Isaiah xi. 15, *The Lord shall utterly destroy* (or *dry up*) *the tongue of the Egyptian sea*, &c.; that is, says he, of Nile, the great river of Egypt. This our Lord hath done more excellently than they imagine. For it was nothing near so great a wonder that Israel should be *baptized into Moses in the sea*, as it was that the people who followed Jesus should be baptized into him with the Holy Ghost poured down upon them from heaven. The passing through the *sea*, and the *cloud* to boot, was not such a certain argument that Moses would bring them out of the great affliction wherein they had been plunged, and lead them to Canaan, their rest and inheritance; as these *rivers of living water*, the gifts of the Holy Ghost, and the admirable effects thereof, filling the world with the *glory of the Lord*, were an undeniable proof to those who were under his conduct, that Jesus was the person would lead them to a better rest, in a more heavenly country, which flows with far sweeter delights than milk and honey. This did, as it were, dip their souls into this belief, and made them sensible that *Jesus is the author of eternal salvation;* far more than the sea itself could *baptize* their forefathers *into Moses*, i. e. persuade them that he was the prophet of God who would deliver them, and bring them to the peaceable enjoyments they desired.

And therefore I observe, after the Jews, who quarrelled at St. Peter's preaching to the Gentiles, were satisfied that the Holy Ghost was fallen upon them, even as upon themselves, they had no more to say but this, *then hath God also to the Gentiles granted repentance unto life*[n]. This they looked upon as the beginning of God's favour and loving-kindness to them, which would conclude in nothing less than the *eternal life* of which we are discoursing. And so this very apostle St. John, after he had put the disciples in mind of the *unction* they had received, and exhorted them to continue in that *doctrine* which it taught, (chap. ii. of this epistle, 20, 24,) immediately adds, that *this is the promise which he hath promised us, even eternal life*[o]. Which was as much as to say, that the *unction* by the *Holy Ghost* had so perfectly instructed them in the certainty of this great happiness, that it was sufficient to

[n] Acts xi. 18. [o] Ver. 25.

move them to abide in the doctrine of Jesus: none being able to teach them better, or to put them in hope of any thing greater than this *eternal life* which he promised, and by the *Holy Ghost* assured.

It is true indeed, which some are forward to object, that we in these days see not such evidences as those believers had; the Holy Ghost not inhabiting thus in every one of our souls as it did in theirs. Nor is there the like reason it should; we being engaged in no such hard services as theirs, which stood in need to be encouraged with the strongest hopes of a glorious reward. They were *in deaths often*, (as St. Paul speaks,) and therefore were in danger to faint, without a most lively gust of immortal life. The whole world was their enemy, and with the greatest rage opposed their preaching; which required a clearer sight of the world to come, and a more sensible descent of invisible powers for their assistance and support. From whence we also derive no small benefit; because the more sensible demonstration they had of it, the firmer grounds of hope are laid for us; whose faith relies upon their testimony, and the power of the Holy Ghost in them. This is sufficient to hearten us in our duty, that our Lord hath given to those whose testimony we have the greatest reason to believe, such visible and palpable evidences of his being alive, and of his intentions to quicken his servants to life everlasting with himself. Let us but heartily apply ourselves, upon these grounds, *to live by the faith of the Son of God*[p]; and we shall find the same spirit that wrought in them operating in us also, to confirm our faith and hope, and make us *rejoice in hope of the glory of God*[q].

And so much may suffice to have been said of the *witness* of the *Holy Ghost*, which perfectly agrees with the other two of the *Father* and of the *Son:* who are all one, you see still, in their testimony as well as in their nature. So I expressed myself in the conclusion of my former discourse about these *three witnesses*[r]; supposing these words, though few, would have sufficiently testified my right belief in the holy Trinity; and that none would have imagined I waved the further explication of that passage, *these three are one*, because I entertained a

[p] [Gal. ii. 20.] [q] [Rom. v. 2.]
[r] Chap. iv. [part i. vol. ii. p. 458.]

sense of it differing from that of the catholic church. I was not conscious to myself of any such heresy; and therefore had no reason to be solicitous to prevent this accusation, by diverting from the subject I had in hand unto another argument. But some, I have heard, have been so unkind, (to say no more, let them examine their hearts from what grounds,) as to whisper such suspicions. And therefore I judge it necessary to take occasion here to declare, that I believe *these three to be one* in the same sense that all catholic writers have done, who have treated of the ever-blessed Trinity. And St. Augustine assures me[r], that "every one who meddled with this argument before him intended to teach this according to the Scriptures, that the Father, Son and Holy Ghost enjoy the divine unity of one and the same substance, in an inseparable equality. *Hæc mea fides est, quia hæc est catholica fides,* (as he concludes that chapter;) This is my faith, because it is the catholic faith." "We have but one God, because there is but one Godhead; and they that are of him have relation to one, though we believe them to be three. For this is not more God and that less, nor is this before and that behind, nor are they separated in will or divided in power, nor are any of those things to be found there which belong to divided beings; but, to speak all in a few words, there is one undivided Godhead in several persons, as in three suns cohering together there is one commixture of light." They are the words of St. Greg. Nazianzen[s], (whom these whisperers sure, if they have read him, take him for a catholic writer), in his discourse concerning the Holy Ghost. To which I will add what St. Augustine again writes in his book of Faith to Petrus Diaconus, chap. i. "If there should be one person of the Father, Son and Holy Ghost, as there is one substance, there would be nothing that could be truly called a Trinity. And again, if, as the Father, Son and Holy Ghost are distinct from each other in the propriety of person, they were also severed by diversity of nature, there would indeed be a true Trinity, but this Trinity would not be one God. But because it is the Trinity in one true God, it is true not only that there is one God, but also that there is a

[r] L. 1. de Trin. c. 4. [tom. viii. col. 753.]
[s] Orat. xxxvii. p. 601. [ed. Ben. orat. xxxi. § 14. tom. i. p. 565 B.]

Trinity; therefore that true God is in persons three, but in one nature One[t]."

"Thus our blessed Saviour," St. Cyril of Hierusalem observes[u], "doth not say, I am the Father, but, *I am in the Father.* And again, he doth not say, I and the Father ἓν εἰμι, am one, but, ἓν ἐσμεν, *are one:* that we may neither exclude the Son from the Godhead, nor confound him with the Father. One, as to the dignity of the divinity; because God begat God. One, as to their kingdom: for the Father doth not rule over some, and the Son over others, (as Absolom who opposed his father,) but over whom the Father reigns, over those reigns the Son. One, because there is no difference, nor any distance between them: for the Father doth not will one thing, and the Son another. One, because the Son doth not make one thing, and the Father another; but there is one workmanship of all, the Father making all things by the Son." I suppose this excellent man will pass for orthodox among our censurers, though he mention many other regards wherein the *Father* and the *Son* (I may add the *Holy Ghost*) *are one*, besides that of their divinity. And therefore I may justly wonder why any should find fault with me (if they be so well skilled in Christian writers as, no doubt, they would be thought) for saying, these three are one in their testimony as well as in their nature. I took it for a catholic exposition, else I would have rejected it. And if this was its only fault, that it was too short, I hope they will rest satisfied now that I have made it longer: unless they be in the number of those whom a late pamphlet speaks of, who judge their brethren as if they had a faculty to see into their hearts, and resolve not to be satisfied with any words they can speak, though, in all appearance, they have no other design in the world but only, according to the best of their understanding, sincerely to serve God and his church.

As for those who would have a further search made into this mystery, I leave it to themselves, if they please thus to employ their time, after they have considered what the most catholic writers have thought of such inquiries. "We ought to acknowledge," saith St. Gregory Nazianzen[v], "one God the

[t] [Tom. vi. Append. col. 19 F.] [u] Cateches. xi. [§ 16. p. 156 D.]
[v] Orat. xxvi. p. 445. [ed. Ben. Orat. xxxii. § 5. tom. i. p. 583 A.]

Father of himself and unbegotten, and one Son begotten of the Father, and one Spirit having its substance of God: of the same nature, the same dignity, the same glory, and the same honour; in all things the same, but only that he is not unbegotten as the Father, nor begotten as the Son. These things are to be known, these things are to be confessed, within these things we must fix; leaving that long babbling and profane novelty of words to those who have nothing else to do." And the forenamed St. Cyril passes the same sentence on those who curiously pried into this secret in his days. "He that begot," says he, "only knows him that is begotten; and he that was begotten of him knows him that begat him. Believe then that God hath a Son; but how, do not inquire: for if thou dost, thou shalt not find. Tell me first who he is that begat, and then I will tell thee who the begotten is. But if thou canst not know the nature of him that begat, do not curiously ask after the manner of the Son's being begotten. It is sufficient to piety, to know that God hath only one Son, one naturally begotten, who did not begin to be when he was born in Bethlehem, but was before all worlds. The Holy Ghost hath, in the Scripture, revealed no more; he hath not told us any thing of the generation of the Son out of the Father. Τί τοίνυν πολυπραγμονεῖς; Why then dost thou pragmatically inquire after those things which the Holy Ghost itself hath not mentioned in the Scripture? Thou who knowest not all that is written, why dost thou busy thyself curiously about those things which are not written? Let it suffice thee to know that God hath but one only-begotten Son: but be not ashamed to be ignorant of the rest; for thou art ignorant of it together with the angels."

Which is the same with what a more modern writer hath said:

Nescire velle, quæ Magister maximus
Docere non vult, erudita est inscitia[x].

To be willing not to know what our supreme Master will not teach, is a learned ignorance. With which I still content myself; and not envy to those who have a list to handle these things more nicely their ignorant learning. They may ven-

[x] [These lines are quoted also, but without mention of the author's name, by Bp. Montagu, Analect. Eccles. exercit. vii. p. 269.]

ture as far as they please, if they think it safe; but ought not to be angry with those who had rather expect further discoveries in the other world: where we shall be more knowing by a "purer and more perfect illumination of the most high Trinity," (as St. Greg. Naz. speaks elsewhere[y],) and yet more modest, and apt to adore the incomprehensible God, the Father, Son, and Holy Ghost. Whose testimony is so full to satisfy us there will be such an happy state, that, before I pass to the other *three witnesses on earth*, I cannot but rest a while, and consider what a great way we are advanced towards a strong and settled belief of *eternal life*, if these things be well digested in our minds.

If we would but always lay before our eyes these records, and were as well acquainted with them as we are with our evidences for our estates, if they were as fresh in our minds as the words of a record which we are to plead in some court where we have a cause to be heard, or the title to our whole estate tried and determined, I do not see how we should possibly doubt of this promise which our Lord hath made to his followers, nor how we should lose the joy and comfort of it in this world of sorrows. Let all those who have taken the pains to read thus far in this treatise be so kind to themselves, as, on all occasions, to recollect what they have read, and in their quiet thoughts to put themselves often in mind that the Father hath said this is true by a voice from heaven at several times: when Jesus was baptized, when he was upon the holy mount, and before a multitude of people he testified that *eternal life* is in him. The *Word* also hath shown us this glorious state when he appeared to St. Stephen, to St. Paul, to his beloved St. John; who have all communicated their knowledge to us, and told us that he assured them he lives, and that we shall live by him. The *Holy Ghost* likewise hath declared this, by coming down upon him, and upon his apostles, and upon his faithful ones. And then they cannot choose but rely most firmly upon such ample and unquestionable testimonies, and be very much affected with this *full assurance of faith* which God works in us. There would be no reason, I am sure, why

[y] Orat. xi. τῆς ἀνωτάτω Τριάδος ἔλλαμψις, κ. τ. λ. [ed. Ben. Orat. viii. § 23, tom. i. p. 232 C.]

they should not as strongly believe and expect the glory that Jesus will give us, though they do not now see it, as we all do the performance of the promise of any person of known honesty and ability, though at a great distance from us. No doubt the faith of Christians would be immovable did they ponder these things; they would never call it into dispute after such demonstrations, whether there be another life or no. Yea, they themselves would become *immovable, and steadfast, and abundant in the work of our Lord*, because the very same witnesses tell them that this is the only way to eternal happiness, which cannot be compassed by any means but by patient continuance in well doing.

How well then would it be with them could we but prevail with all Christian souls to spend some time every day in calling to mind what they have heard these heavenly *witnesses* say? If they would but cast up their eyes every morning towards heaven, and think, there Jesus is; there he lives in great honour and glory; there he sits at the right hand of the throne of God; there St. Stephen saw him; in such glory St. Paul and St. John beheld him; from thence they heard him speak, and make most gracious promises to them; he sent the Holy Ghost from thence to be his witness; there he is preparing a place for all them that have the heart to follow him; thither he will receive our spirits to behold his glory; and with him shall all good men live for ever in unconceivable joy. How would these thoughts inspire and ravish their hearts! How would they change and transform them into quite other things! How mean and contemptible would our petty enjoyments, which now so tempt us, seem in comparison with that divine condition! How impossible would it be to persuade us to yield to the breach of any of his commands, and thereby forfeit such happiness! Yea, how easy, sweet, and pleasant would it be to do as he bids us, in hope of such an incomparable recompense! I leave every one to make trial of it, that he may be able to tell, if he can, what power and force there is in this settled belief.

It is reported by him that writes the Life of Laurentius Justinianus[z], that when he was a youth, about nineteen years

[z] [See his Life, written by his nephew Bernardo Justiniani, (Moreri, *sub nom.*) and prefixed to his works, p. 2. ed. fol. Ven. 1606.]

old, which is an age, you know, most slippery and subject to danger, he thought he saw, one day or night, (I know not well whether,) a beautiful virgin approaching towards him, and thus addressing her speech to him: "Why dost thou, O young man, thus disquiet thine heart and waste thy strength in a vain pursuit of many things, whereon thou pourest forth thy affections? why dost thou seek for rest in such trivial enjoyments? That which thou art so desirous of is in my power to bestow upon thee. And if thou wilt resolve to take me for thy spouse, I promise to bring with me such a portion of peace and contentment as no other person can enrich thee withal." The young man, you may well suppose, was much taken with so rare a feature, and such fair promises, which moved him to crave that he might know her name, and the family from which she was descended. To which she answered, "I am the wisdom of God; that is my name, thence is my parentage: if thou wilt accept of the offer, I will be thine, and give all I have to thee." The youth, says the story, instantly consented; and after he had drawn a contract between them, thought she took her leave of him, and went away to provide for the wedding. Upon this he awaked, and imagined the vision instructed him to betake himself to a monastical life. Which he presently vowed; concluding that in that retirement he was to complete his marriage to the wisdom of God, when he had quitted the empty pleasures of the world.

However fabulous this story may prove, (which seems to have been composed in imitation of that vision of Hercules which many Greek writers mention,) you may make it true if you please. For, behold how the true wisdom of God, our blessed Lord and Saviour, presents himself to you. He hath appeared in most admirable beauty and a glorious form to many of his servants, which they have described, and left us the picture of. In his gospel he is so lively expressed, that we cannot, if we look upon him, but behold him as *the only-begotten of the Father, the brightness of his glory, and the character of his person.* Would it would but please you to listen to the offers he makes you, the portion of life and glory hereafter, together with true peace and contentment here, which he will assure to you. O that you would but draw a lively image of these things in your mind, and represent the King of glory as

soliciting your heart to his service! Do you not believe that it would be infinitely more obliging than such an apparition as that now named? Would it not more easily make you abandon the sinful pleasures of this world than the other made him forsake the lawful? Would not the beauty of our Saviour, and the splendour of his glory in the heavens set before your eyes, be more enamouring than any imaginary or real beauty whatsoever? Would not these words of his be more piercing than any other, *I will give to him that overcomes to inherit all things;* and, *I will be his God, and he shall be my son?* Would it not transport our hearts with joy to hear that he will be contracted to us, and assure us of such a dowry with himself in the heavens? Would it not make all his commands so far from being grievous, that we should think them sweet and delicious above all the pleasures wherein sensual men are drowned? He can make no doubt of it that hath not lost his reason, and is able to understand what the difference is between such a certain truth as this and a dream, and between the commands of our Lord and the obedience which that youth undertook to perform.

Jesus is certainly in the heavens, he sits at the right hand of the majesty on high, he unfeignedly wishes we would be espoused to him, he will settle an eternal inheritance upon us; and he doth not require us to go into monasteries and deserts, to live like hermits and anchorets, to immure ourselves from all society, (though, if he did, we should have no ill bargain of it,) but only to retire seriously into ourselves, and there often meet with him; to live soberly, righteously, and godly while we are in the world; to let no company draw us from his precepts; nor suffer any creature to rob him of our affection. And what a reasonable demand this is, you will then see, when you heartily believe this *eternal life* which he hath promised. Believe, and then you will think there is nothing too much or too hard to be done or suffered for the attaining such a glorious life with our Saviour: which moved St. Stephen to suffer stoning, and St. Paul to be in deaths often, and St. John to endure banishment in a most desolate island, and worse things afterward, that they might be so happy.

And let us with honest hearts, desirous to be what God

would have us, beg the assistance of the *Holy Ghost* to guide us in this way of understanding, which we shall find incomparably the best, to settle in our mind a sense of the happiness to come. "For when the soul comes to the perfection of the Spirit, wholly purged from all affections, and united to the Spirit, the Comforter, by an unspeakable communion, so that by this heavenly mixture it becomes worthy to be a spirit, it is all light, all eye, all spirit, all joy, all rest, all exultation, all love, all goodness and sweetness." . . . "It becomes hereby privy to the counsels of the heavenly King, and knows his secrets. It hath a confidence in the Almighty, and enters into his palace, where the angels and the spirits of the saints are, though it be as yet in this world. For though it hath not attained the entire inheritance prepared for it there, yet it is secure from the earnest it hath received, as if it were crowned and possessed of the kingdom[a]."

"Who would not labour then to be so happy, not only hereafter, but also here? there in possession, and here in hope! What a work is it to ascend up into heaven! What laborious steps can lead us to so great an height? What are the sweats of this mortal life to those eternal recompences? By what pains shall we be worthy of friendship with our Maker? How shall we make ourselves a proper habitation for him to dwell in? for he hath said, *I and my Father will come and dwell in him that loves me and keeps my commands.* This is the end of the good we have in hope: this is the heavenly kingdom: this is the enjoyment of eternal pleasure: this is the never-ceasing joy, the perpetual triumph, the retribution transcending all our labours, nay, all understanding. There are no labours, no, not in thought, equal to this recompense of reward. They all fall so infinitely below it, that for mean, for inconsiderable pains, our transcendently good Lord will give an enjoyment far surpassing all our thoughts. All human endeavours are of no account, though we should wear out a whole life in them, compared with the future blessedness. Though we should sustain a perpetual combat all our days, though they should be prolonged to an hundred years, or to

[a] Macar. Hom. xviii. [§ 10. apud Galland. Bibl. Patr. tom. vii. p. 80 A.] et xvii. [§ 2. p. 73 B.]

twice as much, or thrice, or a thousand times, and all this while we should contend in a virtuous course, we shall seem to have done nothing when we come to confer it with what we shall receive.

"And therefore let us gladly, by such small and poor labours, strive to purchase these supersublime recompences, and treasure up these never-consuming riches. I call those poor and small, which not only seem so to all, but the perpetual combat of an whole age, the most unwearied pursuit of virtue, the most incessant and fervent pains in its service. For such are the goods which our munificent Lord will give in exchange for them, such are the superabundant riches of his retributions, such is the hyperbole of his loving-kindness and goodness, that, for few things, he will give infinite; for beggary, the greatest riches; for perishing things, goods that last for ever.

"These let us seek, and dedicating ourselves wholly to the Lord, make haste to the obtaining so inestimable a good. Let us consecrate soul and body to him, and be fastened to his cross, that we may be worthy of his eternal kingdom, giving glory to the Father, and the Son, and the Holy Ghost, for ever and ever. Amen[b]."

CHAP. IX.

Concerning the witnesses on earth; and first of the Water.

You have seen already how many there are that solicit our affections, and persuade us to believe in the Lord Jesus, and heartily consent to him in whatsoever he requires. So many, that how we should deny him, after he himself hath appeared so often with the promises of Eternal Life, and the Father also and the Holy Ghost have commended him to us as the Prince of peace and the Lord of glory, it is harder to give any reason, than it is to prove that he is the Son of God, and that in him is Eternal Life. For, as if these witnesses were not sufficient,

[b] Georg. Nicomed. in concept. S. Annæ. [Auct. Nov. Biblioth. Patr. Græco-Lat. per Combefim, tom. i. col. 1037 sqq.]

or that we may be borne down by numerous testimonies, there are three more, who are our neighbours, (as I may say,) with whom we are well acquainted, and whose witness none could ever deny, that speak the very same thing, and affirm it as strongly as the other, that *God hath given us eternal life*, and that *it is in his Son Jesus*.

Let us call them in too, and hear what they say, in the same order wherein we examined them before in the former business: first taking the testimony of the Water, then of the Blood, and then of the Spirit.

Of the Water.

By Water I have shown we are to understand either that purity whereof it is the instrument, which was most eminent both in Christ's doctrine and life, or else baptism, both John's and his own, by which he appeared to be the Son of God. Let us have so much patience as to hear all these once more, and consider what they say to the point in hand.

I.

And as for the purity and holiness of his doctrine, there is much in it to persuade us that he hath life in himself, and will bestow it upon his followers. Certain it is that (1) it naturally lifts up the mind towards heaven, and disposes those that entertain it to look for eternal life, for which it is but a preparation. For it teaches us to abstract our hearts from this flesh wherewith we are clothed, and from this world wherein we live, as not worthy of all those thoughts and that care which we are apt to bestow upon them. The very intent and purpose of it, we cannot but see, is to wean our minds from earthly enjoyments, and to take off our affections from the pleasures of sense; to make riches and the praise of men seem little things, and to give us contentment with our portion of present goods though never so small: in short, to render us something like to God himself whilst we are at this distance from him. What can any man make of this, but that it is a preparation for another life; an institution which designs to form men, and make them fit for an higher world? Do but take a review of that compendium which I have drawn of this doctrine in my former book, and you will be satisfied that it is nothing else

but a contrivance to make us heavenly; and intends to guide us to such a life as is a prevention of heaven, a beginning of the celestial state, whereby we shall live, in part, as men of another world, and not of this.

Which future world (2) it is manifest his heavenly doctrine supposes; or else it would be so far from that wisdom which was eminent in him, that it would be the greatest absurdity that can be imagined. For it teaches us, if his service require it, to deny ourselves even in the most innocent and lawful enjoyments of this life; to forsake father and mother and houses and lands for his name's sake; yea, to lay down our very lives rather than forsake his doctrine, and violate his commands. These are express lessons which his sermons teach his disciples: but are things so sublime, so much above the reach of flesh and blood, that it would be the vainest thing in the world to propose them to men's observance, without the hope of something in another life to reward such hard services. He would have had no followers on these terms, had he not made it as plain and evident as the rest of his doctrine, that he would be *the Author of eternal salvation to them that would obey him.* Men were not so fond of troubles and torments and death as to expose themselves to the danger of them, if they had not seen the greatest reason to believe that their Master would recompense their present sufferings with a future happiness so incomparably greater, that it would be the highest folly to avoid them. None can suppose the author of such a religion to be so weak as not to understand that men would never embrace this profession, unless, at the same time that he called them to this high pitch of piety, he *called them* also, as the apostle speaks, *to his kingdom and glory.* And therefore, without all doubt, our Lord took care to preach this as the principal thing, and to give good assurance of a blessed state to come; because without this it had been the most ungrounded and foolish undertaking that ever man went about, to persuade the world to be so mortified, to quit all present possessions, and to part with their lives for his sake. He must have been the most unreasonable of all other men in preaching such doctrine, and supposed the world void of all reason, if he expected to have it believed, had he not been certain himself, and been able by evident proofs to persuade others, that all

those who hearkened to him should be no losers, but exceeding great gainers, by quitting all things upon his account. If he had not held this truth in his hands, as clear as the sun, that they who would follow him should be immortally happy, he might have stretched them out long enough before he had drawn so much as one follower after him. The trees would as soon have followed him as men; who would never have stirred a foot in such a narrow path, unless he had shown them plainly that it led to everlasting life.

Let us consider and illustrate this a little. Would not he expose himself to laughter and scorn, that should earnestly persuade his neighbours to go and labour hard in his fields all day, by which they should get just nothing for their pains at night? Would it not seem a piece of strange mockery and contempt of us, and as strange a folly in him that should invite us to enter into his service, which he confessed would make us sweat, and engage us in many toilsome employments; and, when we inquired what wages he gave, should be able to assure us never a farthing that lay in his power or will to bestow upon us? Would they not be equally ridiculous, he that should make and they that should embrace such a proposal? Might not such a trifler expect rather to be kicked than to be followed by the multitude? Should we not hear them expressing their indignation in such speeches as these: What! Do you take us for arrant fools? Do you think that we are mere mushrooms? that our brains are made of a sponge, or our heads stuffed with wet straw? What do you make of us? or what have we done that argues us to be such blocks and trunks as you suppose us? And yet such was the constant preaching of our ever blessed Saviour, that if he had not made his promises as plain and certain as his commands, he would have been liable to such language. For he calls men, as you read in that parable Matt. xx., to a laborious life of piety. From the beginning of his preaching to the end of it he had no other design. *Early in the morning*, when he first appeared in the world, *he went out*[c]: and what was it to do, but *to hire labourers into his vineyard?* At the *third hour* he went out again, and said to those whom he found idle, *Go ye also into*

[c] Matt. xx. 1.

the vineyard[d]. At the *sixth* and the *ninth* hour of his life he still followed the same business. At the *eleventh* also he finds other loiterers, and says to them also, *Why stand you here all the day idle*[e]*?* Would they have moved from their place, think you, if he had not *agreed with them* to pay them for their pains? Would they have returned no other answer, but that *no man hath hired us;* and not also have added, What will you give us? what shall we gain by our labour? had he not satisfied them about that matter? If there had been no wages to be expected, they had better have stood idle still, or have stayed for some other master. Had it not been evident that the Lord of the vineyard was a wealthy person, able to give *every man his penny*, i. e. a reward for his service, he might have called long enough, and seen his ground all overrun with briars and thorns, before he had procured any labourers to go into it. Certainly, if we will but allow our Saviour to have been a person of ordinary reason and common capacity, we cannot imagine he would have endured so long toil and travel, and walked all the country of Judæa over to win proselytes to him, if he had not made it as visible that he would bring men to the blessed sight of God in eternal rest and peace, as it was that he called them to a God-like life of piety, righteousness and true holiness during their stay in this present world. We must depress him into the rank of the most witless men, or else believe that he who required so much work from his servants demonstrated he was a good master, rich, and furnished with the most ample rewards.

And therefore (3) we may well believe that he *came* with such testimonies from above, from the *Father* and from the *Holy Ghost*, and intended *himself* to appear from heaven as the author of eternal life; without which he could not have gone about to establish such a doctrine; or if he had, would not have succeeded. One of these *witnesses* exceedingly justify the other, and they are not to be divided. We have reason to think a person of his understanding, *who spake as never man spake*, (his very enemies being judges,) would not have attempted the settlement of such a strict rule of life as his doctrine contains, without such countenance from heaven as I have

[d] Matt. xx. 4. [e] Verse 6.

mentioned, to persuade the world that he would lead them thither. Though I must add (4) that the strict purity and holiness of his doctrine singly considered is of great weight and moment to persuade us that *eternal life* is in him; because this is a part, nay, a principal part, of his doctrine. Which he, who in all other things that he said was unreprovable, would not have affirmed so expressly and constantly, if he had not been fully assured it was true.

Do but observe how this doctrine is constantly intermixed with all his sermons. It is the very strain of his preaching, that if any man would follow him, and do as he did, he should find rest for his soul; and that God *the Father* of all *would honour those who did him service*[f]. This he proclaims in the plainest terms, and the clearest manner: *I am the light of the world*[g], (*illuminator et deductor humani generis*, as Tertullian excellently expresses it[h],) the enlightener and the conductor or guide of mankind: *He that follows me shall have the light of life;* the wisdom, that is, which shall lead him to immortal bliss. And, to make this more manifest, let it be noted, (1) how he proclaims this to every man, that the Son of man must die, *that whosoever believeth in him should not perish, but have eternal life. For God so loved the world, that he gave his only-begotten Son, that whosoever believeth in him should not perish, but have everlasting life*[i]. And (2) he asserts it with the greatest earnestness, with the strongest and most vehement asseverations. *Verily, verily, I say unto you, he that believeth on me hath everlasting life*[k]. He tells them also (3) with the same assurance, that God *had sealed him* for this purpose; or set a plain mark upon him, whereby all might see that he was to be the author of everlasting life[l]. And observe (4) that, having told them it was visible, if they pleased to open their eyes, that God the Father had designed him to give them immortal satisfaction, he repeats this doctrine a great many times in that chapter[m]: insomuch that St. Peter concludes at the latter end of that sermon, there was no master comparable to him, who had *the words of eternal life*[n]. And it is further observable, that he affirms (5) he came to bring his followers to

[f] John xii. 26. [g] John viii. 12. [h] Apolog. cap. xxi. [p. 19 B.] [i] John iii. 15, 16. [k] John vi. 47. [l] Ver. 27. [m] Ver. 33, 35, 39, 40, 47, 48, 51, 54, 57. [n] Ver. 68.

the greatest happiness: *I am come that they might have life, and that they might have it more abundantly*[o]. And (6) that he tells them again, he came to publish this glad tidings *by the appointment* of the Father: *I know that his commandment is life everlasting: whatsoever I speak therefore, even as the Father said unto me, so I speak*[p]. And (7) that he affirms he hath power to make good what he promises: *And I give unto them eternal life; and they shall not perish, neither shall any pluck them out of my hand*[q]. *Glorify thy Son, as thou hast given him power over all flesh, that he should give eternal life to as many as thou hast given him*[r]. And, lastly, he tells them that he was such a person as might well be credited in all this; since he *came down from heaven*, and *was at that moment in heaven*[s]. Which he repeats again; *I am from above, I am not of this world*[t]: and *I speak that which I have seen with my Father*[u]: and *I proceeded forth and came from God: neither came I of myself, but he sent me*[x]. For which reason he doth not discourse of immortal life as a philosopher, going about to prove it by reasons and arguments; but only asserts it as one that had divine authority, (for which he was to be believed), and could himself make men eternally happy. This was the only thing that could be disputed and needed proof, that he came from heaven to illuminate the world by his instructions. And this he did not desire they should take upon his bare word, but abundantly demonstrated it: and told them, that after his death they should still see it made more evident *that he did nothing of himself, but as the Father had taught him, he spake these things*[y]. For then, as you shall see in due place, God the Father declared all these words to be true by raising him from the dead.

These things he said so often, so openly, so confidently, and with such appeals to God, (who bare him witness, as you have heard, and never in the least contradicted what he said,) that we have great reason to believe he did not forge all this; but delivered the mind and will of God as sincerely when he said he would give men *eternal life*, as he did when he charged them to live *soberly, righteously* and *godly* in this present world. Certain it is that he himself believed what he preached,

[o] John x. 10. [p] xii. 50. [q] x. 28. [r] xvii. 1, 2. [s] iii. 13. [t] viii. 23. [u] Ver. 38. [x] Ver. 42. [y] Ver. 28.

and had no doubt, but a perfect assurance of it; as will appear if we pass to the second thing which we are briefly to consider,

II.

His own most holy life, in the strictest obedience to God the Father. This Abarbinel, in his discourse upon Isaiah xi, which I have so often mentioned, makes one of the marks of the Messiah; the perfect temper of his desires and affections, and the direction of them according to the measures of the divine law: which he thinks is the meaning of those words, he shall be *of quick understanding in the fear of the Lord*[z]. This was so remarkable in Jesus, who was so truly, so completely and constantly pious, that there never was any person so qualified to lay claim to this dignity as he was. His life was so free from all blame, such a perfect abstinence from all the pleasures of this world, such a contempt of all that which we think most worthy of our indefatigable labours; that it hath a strong force in it to persuade us that he indeed sought eternal glory, and was fully assured he should be possessed of it for himself and for all his.

Who but a man so persuaded of his doctrine would have lived in poverty, when he might, no question, by the multitude and devotion of his followers, have made himself incredibly rich? What should incline him to remain all his days without an house so big as a fox or the smallest bird is owner of, but an expectation of that house which is eternal in the heavens? Could any thing move him to give away to the poor all that was given him, but a certain knowledge of great treasures above? We cannot conceive what should make him refuse the dignity of a king, when the people intended to proclaim him[a]; if it were not this undoubted persuasion, that he was the King of heaven, and should sit down at the right hand of the throne of God. Would any of those that doubt this labour as he did, night and day, for nothing? Would any poor man cure multitudes of all diseases, and take not a farthing for his pains? Would anybody live, if he could help it, and not know where he should eat the next meal's meat? And who is he that can find in his heart to endure the hatred of the chiefest of the people, and to be in perpetual danger of snares and treacherous

[z] Isa. xi. 3. [a] [John vi. 16.]

designs for the taking away his life, without any hope to be a gainer by it? Is there any likelihood that our Lord would have laboured in such sort as not to have leisure so much as to eat, and after all that kind pains be content to be called deceiver and devil, and to run the hazard of being stoned and killed; and yet have no assured expectation to reap some fruit hereafter from all his toil and trouble? Let him believe it that loves to sting his fingers with nettles, or to roll his naked body in snow: we that have a more tender sense of our own pleasure must have leave to be of another mind. Let any man try to persuade himself to lead such a life; and by his unwillingness he will easily be convinced that our Lord, who could look for nothing in this world from what he did and suffered, would never have so cheerfully, freely, and without any regret, followed such a course, had he not known as surely that he should be made glorious thereby hereafter as he knew that he must be made miserable by it here.

Ask his *poverty* then, and that will bear witness that he laid up treasures in the heavens. Ask his *humility*, and that will tell you that he sought for the glory of God only. Inquire of his *charity* and *bounty*, his wonderful bounty to all men, and that will bear record both that *all fulness* is in him, and that he will not envy any thing he hath to his followers. Let his *contentedness* speak, and that will assure you he was possessed of something greater than all worldly goods; which he could tell better how to live without, than others to live comfortably withal. Examine his *labours* and pains, his travels and journeys, trace his steps over sea and land; and they will all confess that he sought a better country, which is an heavenly. Ask him what he meant by his *patience*, his willing endurance of all reproaches, calumnies, hatreds, persecutions; and they will likewise conclude in the same testimony, that he had *a joy set before him*, which made him despise them all. In short, consult his *fasting* forty days, his enduring so many temptations of the devil, slighting his offers, rejecting his counsels; and you can have no account of them but this, that he had indeed *the meat that endures to everlasting life;* that he verily believed the voice from heaven, which said he was the *Son of God;* and that he knew he had a greater glory than all the kingdoms of the world which the devil offered him.

And after all this, I suppose there is no considering man but will think the unquestionable belief of such a person as he was to be of very great moment to settle ours in this weighty business. It is safest for us, without all dispute, to follow the judgment of one so well able to discern truth from falsehood, that he was of as *quick understanding* in all things else as he was *in the fear of the Lord*. We have great reason to think that he was in the right, and was no more deluded himself than he intended to delude others. There was not the least flaw, as I showed in the former treatise, that appeared in his understanding; nor could he be seduced into this belief by any earthly appetite or desire; and therefore we ought to conclude he was abundantly satisfied, by the most evident demonstrations, that he should live for ever, and be the Author of eternal life to others: which, among other reasons, should very much satisfy us.

III.

Who may further consider also the baptism of that famous person St. John the Baptist: that is, his whole ministry, which is comprehended under the name of his baptism; as circumcision sometimes includes the whole law of Moses. In this we shall find, if we examine it, a plain testimony to the great truth we are treating of, that *eternal life* is in Jesus for all the faithful. All that nation who persecuted our Saviour held John for a prophet, and went to be baptized of him: insomuch that the wisest of them durst not affirm that his commission was *from men*, (or that he taught and baptized the people from a private motion of his own,) but rather that he undertook this office by authority *from heaven*. Upon which account they were bound to receive his testimony concerning our Saviour as unquestionable: which they themselves clearly discerned to be a good consequence; and therefore would not reason this matter out with our Saviour, but let it fall to the ground, when they themselves had begun the dispute.

Now he testified as plainly that by him we shall have eternal life as he did that he is the Son of God. For, (1) as soon as ever he began to preach, he told them *the kingdom of heaven was at hand*[a]: which language the Jews understood well

[a] Matt. iii. 2.

enough, and therefore never asked what he meant; for so they had learnt, out of the prophet Daniel, to call the kingdom of Christ: whose throne was to be erected by an heavenly power, and not by any human means; and under whose government they expected the greatest blessings that heaven ever meant to bestow upon them. Now that under this name the Baptist comprehends the eternal felicity which Christ should bring, is apparent from the exposition which he makes of it in the following part of the chapter: where he tells those who were dubious, that he was not the Christ, but they might shortly expect him; and that when he came he would *gather the wheat into his garner*, as well as *burn up the chaff with unquenchable fire*[b]. This he said when the chief of the Jews came to his baptism; which was a testimony that Jesus, who presently came after him, was to open the kingdom of heaven, and gather all pious men thither, as wheat into a *garner*: which though it denote first of all the church of Christ, yet must needs include in it the notion of a church to be made exceeding glorious; because the king of it hath his seat and throne nowhere but in heaven.

And then, (2) after this the Baptist gave a more express testimony of what they were to expect from Jesus, when he said, *Behold the Lamb of God, that taketh away the sin of the world*[c]: which words must needs intend (as hath been said already) that he is to restore us to the favour of God wherein our first parents stood, to take away that which separates between God and us, and to make us capable of paradise again.

And still more expressly (3) he says, *He that believeth on the Son hath everlasting life: and he that believeth not the Son shall not see life*[d]. Unto which testimony our blessed Saviour himself appeals[e], after he had been discoursing[f] of his power to give life to mankind. Indeed there was a witness, he shows, which in itself was far stronger than this; and that was *the works which he did*: but this was a better witness to them, (and therefore our Saviour uses it,) who durst not affirm John's baptism was not from heaven; whereas they boldly said the works of our Saviour were not from thence, but from the devil. This is the meaning of those words that follow, after

[b] Matt. iii. 12. [c] John i. 29. [d] John iii. 36. [e] v. 33.
[f] Ver. 25, 26, &c.

his appeal to John's witness: *But I receive not testimony from man: but these things I say that ye might be saved. He was a burning and shining light: and ye were willing for a season to rejoice in his light. But I have greater witness than that of John*[g], &c. That is, "Though I do not chiefly rely on any human testimony, such as John's was, and indeed do not need it, (having one more immediately divine and heavenly;) yet for your sakes, who have a good opinion of him and own him for a prophet, and whom I would willingly convince and save by any means, I instance in him so much, and remind you of what he said concerning me. That which makes me first of all speak of his testimony, and so often refer you to it, is not because it is the first and chiefest in its own nature, much less the only testimony I have, but because I think it will be most effectual to do you good; he being in himself a most excellent person shining among you in great wisdom and zeal; and also by you so esteemed, and received among you (at least for a season) with a great deal of satisfaction."

And to this now add (4) another thing, which I took notice of in the former treatise, and must here just call to remembrance; that our Saviour himself was baptized of him at Bethabara, a place that denoted him to be the person who should lead men to their rest, the Joshua that should conduct them into the land of promise; and you will confess this WATER we are speaking of to be the water of life, which, if we drink of it, will revive and cheer our fainting spirits. If we do but receive, I mean, the doctrine of the Lord Jesus into our hearts; if we seriously consider it together with the strain of his life; if we mark the office of St. John Baptist, the end of his ministry, and the testimony which his baptism gave to our Saviour; we shall find them all leading us into this comfortable belief, that he is the Prince of life, and that none can miscarry who live as he taught, and tread in his steps, but have good hopes in this world, which shall not make them ashamed in the world to come.

IV.

This Jesus himself also bade his disciples believe, by the same authority whereby he baptized and gathered disciples to

[g] Ver. 34, 35, 36.

himself: which none could do, I showed you, as he did, but the Christ; in whose days the Jews expected an universal baptism and cleansing of the people. Now the very end and intention of his baptism was, it is very well known, for *the remission of sins*, and consequently for *eternal life*. This he taught men to believe, and then authorized his disciples to receive men to these high and noble privileges by baptizing them in his name: upon which followed such a marvellous change in their souls, they were so enlightened, renewed, and transformed, that holy men doubted not to call this baptism the "water of salvation[h]," the "water of life," and the "immortal nativity." Nay, St. Augustine[i] informs us, that the Punic Christians called baptism by no other name than "salvation;" which he thought so proper, that he ascribes it to an ancient and apostolical tradition[j]. And Paschasius calls it "life," in his book of the Body and Blood of our Lord; where he says of those who died shortly after baptism, that *post perceptam vitam*, 'after they were made partakers of life,' they in nothing declined from the way.

And for this they had the authority of our Saviour, who said, after he was risen from the dead, *He that believeth and is baptized shall be saved*[k]; and showed St. John *a pure river of water of life, clear as crystal, running through the midst of the street*[l] *of the new Jerusalem, from the throne of God and of the Lamb*[m]: which is a plain description of the place of baptism, appointed by God and our Saviour in the midst of Christian assemblies (called *streets*, because they are the place of concourse), for the purifying of the world, and restoring us to paradise again. And he calls his baptism *water of life*, because it runs thither; and there we begin to live[n], and are admitted to the friendship of God, and put in assured hope that the life which then begins shall be continued to eternal life. It is usual with the ancient writers of Christianity to speak of a μεταποίησις 'instauration,' μετάπλασις a 'transform-

[h] S. Cypr. Epist. ad Donatum, [pp. 2, 3.] et ad Magnum. [pp. 181, 3.]

[i] Optatus, lib. v. [De Schism. Donat. §. 2. p. 80.]

[j] Lib. i. de Peccatorum meritis, &c. c. 24. [tom. x. col. 19 E.]

[k] Mark xvi. 16.

[l] So Andræas Cæsar. joins the beginning of ver. 2. to ver. 1. [p. 831.]

[m] Rev. xxii. 1, 2.

[n] S. Basil. ἀρχή μοι ζωῆς τὸ βάπτισμα, L. de Spiritu S. c. x. [tom. iii. p. 22 A.]

ation,' μεταστοιχείωσις a 'transfiguration' of men's souls in baptism: by which, says St. Basil, the soul so glisters, that ὁ Θεὸς οἱονεὶ θρόνου αὐτὴν ἑαυτῷ ἀπεργάζεται[o], 'God forms it to himself to be as it were his throne.' And so St. Cyprian testifies of himself, in his Epistle to Donatus, that though he was perplexed in so many errors as made him think he could never be rid of them, and so led away by those vices which stuck close to him, that, despairing to do better, he began to favour them, as things proper to him: yet when he had received baptism, "a light from above came streaming into him, a celestial breath repaired him into a new man; and after a wonderful manner he was confirmed in those things which seemed dubious, and saw those things clearly which before were obscure, and found a power to do that which he judged not only difficult, but impossible."

Now this change which they felt in their thoughts, desires, and passions, as soon as they were baptized, was a powerful argument to persuade them that they should as really rise from the dead and live eternally, as they were now quickened, when they lay dead in trespasses and sins, to the life of God and true piety. Which was the reason that they chose Easter rather than any other time, as the most proper season for the receiving the grace of baptism. So the same St. Basil tells us, that "every day, every hour, every moment is a time for baptism; but there is none so fit as the χρόνος οἰκειότερος, 'the more proper and peculiar season' for it, which is Easter day. For the day is μνημόσυνον ἀναστάσεως, 'a memorial of the resurrection,' and baptism is δύναμις πρὸς τὴν ἀνάστασιν, 'a power granted to us to rise again.' So that on the day of the resurrection we should receive the grace of the resurrection. And therefore the church calls on those whom she hath conceived and travailed withal a good while, that now she may bring them forth[p]." This belief they were desirous, by all means, to impress upon men's minds; and would have them look upon baptism "as the seal of a second life[q]." In which they could not be deceived, finding such a beginning of it

[o] In Psal. xxix. [al. xxviii. tom. i. p. 123 E.]

[p] Exhortat. ad Baptismum. [tom. ii. p. 114 A.]

[q] Gr. Naz. Carm. Iam. Λουτρόν ἐστι δευτέρου βίου σφραγίς. [sect. ii. carm. 34. lin. 237. tom. ii. p. 622.]

already, as testified the mighty power of God working in them.

And therefore St. Paul, with great reason, alleges baptism as a public witness to the faith of the church about the resurrection of the dead and the life of the world to come: *Else what shall they do which are baptized for the dead, if the dead rise not at all? why are they then baptized for the dead*[r]*?* The resurrection of the dead was so much the hope of Christians, and baptism gave such strength to their hope, that when any person, newly instructed in the Christian faith, died before he could receive baptism, some of his friends, it is reported from Irenæus, received it after his departure in his name. To what purpose do they this? says the apostle, (if he have respect to this custom,) why do they thus trouble themselves if they look for nothing after death? This shows, that even those who were mistaken in other things, (as in this about baptizing for their deceased friends,) thought the dead were not lost, but that there was hope of their future happiness, else they would not still have continued to assist them, and taken all the care they could that they might not be prejudiced for want of baptism, which, in their stead, they received. They would not have been so senseless as to concern themselves to do any thing for those who were gone from this world, if they had not believed another, and looked upon them as capable there of *eternal life*. Into the belief and expectation of which all Christians whatsoever were baptized: which perhaps is all that the apostle means by this question, *Why are they baptized for the dead?* which Rigaltius thus interprets: "Why are they baptized *ut mortui resurgant*, 'that after death they may rise again?' why are they asked at the font, whether they believe the resurrection of the dead[s]?" So that *for the dead* is for themselves, in hope of what shall follow after death, viz. a blessed resurrection.

Which is the interpretation of St. Chrysostom, (as I have observed elsewhere[t],) who also bids us take notice how that which they expressed in words, when they professed to believe this great Article of the Christian faith, was also represented,

[r] 1 Cor. xv. 29.

[s] In Tertull. de Resurrect. Carnis, c. 48. [p. 355.]

[t] Aqua Genitalis. [vol. i. p. 27.]

as in an image, by the very act of baptism, in which, "the going into the water, and the coming out, was a sign of their descending to the state of the dead, and of their ascending from thence to life again." There is no man that is baptized but by the very rite and manner of it professes to die, at least, to sin, and to rise again to newness of life. This death and resurrection (as the apostle teaches[u]) is most lively represented there. But this is not all that is intended by it: for even those[x] who, in that sense, were already mortified and renewed by receiving the Holy Ghost before their baptism, (as Cornelius and his family,) proceeded notwithstanding to receive that holy washing; and by their submersion took upon them the likeness of the dead, and by their emersion appeared as men risen again from the dead. If there were no other death to be escaped but that in sin, and no other resurrection to be expected but that to newness of life, why were they, who had attained these, baptized as dead men? and being already dead to sin, why again sustained they the image of death, out of which they believed and professed they should come? This very action of theirs proves that they looked for another resurrection after death, which is the resurrection of the body. And this profession of theirs was so much the more weighty as they were the more learned and instructed, being already taught by the Holy Ghost: by whose power they were already dead to sin, and made alive to God; and by whose instruction they professed to believe, that as there is another death, viz. that of the body, so they should overcome it by the mighty power of Christ, raising their very bodies from the dead.

There are several other interpretations of this place; as that of Epiphanius[y], who expounds it of those who received baptism 'at the point of death:' but I shall not trouble the reader with them, because they all conclude the same thing, that baptism was a public profession of the hope of immortality, and a seal also of the promises of God, not only to that particular person who at any time received it, but to the whole church, both to the living and the dead: who, as oft as baptism was repeated, had an open assurance given them from

[u] Rom. vi. 3–5.
[x] Arias Montanus. [in loc. p. 55.]
[y] Hæresi 38. [lege 28. § 6. tom. i. p. 114 B.]

God, (by whose authority it was administered,) that they should rise again to everlasting life.

And so I shall dismiss this first witness on earth: which is the more to be regarded, because, though it be not so great in itself as those which speak from heaven, yet to us it is very considerable, and cannot be denied by those who cavil at some of the other. For all men acknowledge the life and doctrine of our Saviour to be incomparably excellent; and John the Baptist stands upon record in Josephus for a person of severe and strict sanctity; and the whole Christian church (who were not so childish as to build their hope on a sandy foundation, but stood immovable, as you shall hear, like a house upon a rock, when all the world stormed and made the most furious assaults upon them,) believed thus from the beginning: as appears by their holy profession which they made when they entered into the gates of the church by baptism.

The mighty power of which *water of life* they have thus celebrated with praises. "Baptism is the splendour of the soul, the change of the life, the answer of the conscience towards God. It is the help of our weakness, the putting off the flesh, the attainment of the Spirit, the communion of the Word, the reformation of God's workmanship, the drowning of sin, the participation of light, and the destruction of darkness. It is the chariot which carries us to God, our fellow-travelling with Christ, the establishment of our faith, the perfecting of our minds, the key of the kingdom of heaven, the foundation of a second life[z]. At this the heavens rejoice; this the angels magnify, as of kin to their brightness; this is the image of their blessedness. We would willingly praise this, if we could say any thing worthy of it[a]."

"Let us never cease however to give him thanks who is the Author of such a gift; returning him the small tribute of a cheerful voice for such great things as he hath bestowed on us. For thou, truly, O Lord, art the pure and perpetual fountain of goodness; who wast justly offended at us, but hast, in much love, had mercy on us; who hatedst us, but art reconciled to us; who pronouncedst a curse upon us, but hast given

[z] Κρηπὶς δευτέρου βίου, Greg. Naz. Orat. xi. [ed. Ben. Orat. viii. § 20. p. 230 C.] [a] Orat. xl. [§ 3. tom. i. p. 692 C.]

us thy blessing; who didst expel us from paradise, but hast called us back again unto it. Thou hast taken away the fig-leaf covering of our nakedness, and clothed us with a most precious garment. Thou hast opened the prison doors, and dismissed those that stood condemned. Thou hast sprinkled us with pure water, and cleansed us from all our filthiness. Adam, if thou callest him, will be no longer ashamed: he will not hide himself, nor run away from thee. The flaming sword doth not now encircle paradise, making it inaccessible to those that approach it; but all things are turned into joy to us who were heirs of sin and death. Paradise and heaven itself is now open to mankind. The creation, both here and above, consents to be friends after a long enmity. Men and angels are piously agreed in the same theology.

"For all which blessings let us unanimously sing that hymn of joy which the inspired mouth in ancient times loudly prophesied. *I will greatly rejoice in the Lord, my soul shall be joyful in my God; for he hath clothed me with the garments of salvation, he hath covered me with the robe of righteousness; he hath decked me with ornaments as a bridegroom, and as a bride adorned me with jewels*[b]. This adorner of the bride is Christ; who is, and who was before, and who will be blessed both now and for ever. Amen[c]."

CHAP. X.

Concerning the testimony of the Blood, the second witness on earth.

THE next *witness* which comes in order to be examined is the *Blood:* by which, I told you, we are to understand the *crucifixion* and *death* of the Lord Jesus, with all the attendants of it. This is a *witness* which the greatest enemies of Christianity cannot but confess was heard to speak in his behalf. The stubborn Jews, who will be loath to grant that a voice from heaven declared him the *Son of God*, cannot deny that their

[b] Is. lxi. 10.
[c] Greg. Nyssen. L. de Baptismo Christi. [tom. iii. pp. 380, 1.]

forefathers embrued their hands in his *blood*. For in the Babylonian Talmud[c] it is delivered as a tradition among them, that "they hanged Jesus, בערב הפסח, in the evening of the passover: and that a crier went before him forty days, saying, He is to be carried forth to be stoned, for conjuring and drawing Israel to apostasy. If any one can speak any thing for him to prove him innocent, let him appear." It is an hard matter to have any truth from these fabulous people, without the mixture of a tale together with it. When they cannot gainsay what we believe, that their nation were the great instruments of his death, they endeavour to find false reasons for so villainous a murder.

But they granting that his *blood* was shed by them, we shall soon prove it was for another cause; even that which is recorded in our books. Which none ever undertook to confute, though they were put forth in the face both of Jews and Romans: who might long since have exposed our religion to shame, if Pontius Pilate could have averred, out of the records of the court where our Saviour was judged, that things were not so as his disciples have related. And that this *blood* of his so shed, and upon such an account as we have received, is of very great force to induce us to believe another world, and an eternal happiness there for us with Jesus, I am now to demonstrate; and shall easily make good, unless we will entertain such low and slight thoughts of him, as no man can suffer to lodge in his mind, who attends to the doctrine he preached, and all the arguments which prove him to be the *Son of God*. That alone indeed is sufficient to justify all that he preached; particularly, that God by him will give *eternal life* to those that obey him. If he be so nearly related to God (as even his bloody death, I showed in the former treatise, proved him to be), we may believe him, when he says, that, *as the Father hath life in himself, so hath he given to the Son to have life in himself*. But I shall wave this general way of reasoning, though undeniable; and offer some things more particular to every one's serious consideration.

I. It is apparent by the whole story, which it would be too

[c] Vid. [Lightfoot.] Horæ Hebr. in Matt. p. 309. [Works. vol. xi. p. 346. ex Gem. Bab. in Sanhedrim. cap. 6. hal. 4.] et Tzemach David ad an. 3761. [inter observ. Davidis Ganz. p. 259.]

long to relate, that to lay down his life was an act perfectly voluntary in our Saviour, who, if he had pleased, might have avoided it. He might have chosen whether he would have died or no: for *no man* (as he said [d]) *could take his life away, but he laid it down for himself;* openly professing, *I have power to lay it down, and I have power to take it again.* He needed not have fallen into their cruel hands, it is plain, unless he had freely consented to it. And when they were about to apprehend him, many legions of angels were ready for his rescue, if he had pleased to lay his commands upon them [e]. Nay, when he made the soldiers feel his power, so that *they went backward and fell to the ground* [f], he could withal have escaped and gone his ways, as he had done at other times; when this reason alone is given why they did not apprehend him, as they attempted, *because his hour was not yet come* [g]; that is, he did not see it to be the fittest time for him to resign up himself to their power.

Now it cannot enter into man's deliberate thoughts, that he would have so freely, without any constraint or resistance, given up his life; especially when by preserving it he might have lived in great repute, esteem and admiration of the people, yea, have been honoured for escaping out of the hands of his enemies; if he had not been sure of *eternal life* and a greater glory in the heavens, which he should win by going so willingly out of this present world. *He that saved others* could surely have *saved himself*, and spoiled their jeer [h], if his will had not been otherwise resolved. He that raised Lazarus from the dead could have more easily struck all his opposers dead at his feet, if it had been his pleasure. What should make his will then thus bent upon death? What hindered the putting forth of his power for himself, which it is manifest he so often used for the benefit of others? What could move him so tamely, like a lamb, to give his throat to the bloody knife, and to hang so meekly upon an infamous cross; if it were not the contemplation of an incomparable felicity, which he hoped to obtain by his obedience to God, and bearing witness to the truth?

All men of sense cannot choose but look upon this as an un-

[d] John x. 18. [e] Matt. xxvi. 53. [f] John xviii. 6. [g] John vii. 30; viii. 20. [h] Matt. xxvii. 42.

doubted argument, that himself steadfastly believed, and had good assurance of, the truth of what he preached. For who is there that can find in his heart to die, and die in such a manner, so painfully and with such ignominy, for that which he thinks in his conscience is false, nay, does not know to be certain? It is next to an impossibility, that any man in his wits should so far forget himself, as to be forward to throw away all he hath, against the strongest inclinations and persuasions of nature, which abhors death, and most of all a cruel and disgraceful death, merely to justify a lie; which human nature is ashamed of, without the help of torments to make it odious. There have been sundry examples of rashness and foolish boldness; but none can be produced, nor easily imagined, of such an one as this. For what can a man propose to himself, who lays his life at the stake, to make good that which he believes hath no truth in it? What can he hope to get by such a mad resolved obstinacy? No man attempts any thing without an end; much less will he expose his life to the least hazard, without a cause of some moment. What can you see then in this case weighty enough to be cast into the balance against a man's life, which should make him sacrifice it freely, as our Saviour did? Riches, and all the pleasures they can provide for us, could be of no consideration; because they will do a man no service when he is dead, and our Saviour had no posterity to whom to leave them. Honour and fame also seem to be of as little value; for what satisfaction is it to be talked of in the world, when we have left it, and hear nothing of what is done in it? Yet this is all that can be imagined to have any power in this business. One may possibly, you may fancy, for to get a great name in the world by being the author of a new opinion or sect, throw away his life; though he know that he doth but broach a lie. A strange supposition this is, which a man in his right senses, one would think, should not be inclined to make. But since some have pretended it is possible, I shall briefly show that it could have no hand in our Saviour's sufferings. As will appear if we consider, either the circumstances of his death, or the quality of his doctrine, or the manner of his life.

II. The circumstances of his death were such, that if they be but a little examined, you will presently find there is no place for this conceit. For (1) it stands upon good record, that

he himself knew of his death beforehand, and foretold it, with the manner of it: and yet was so far from endeavouring to avoid it, that he went of his own accord to the very place where he knew they would come to apprehend him. This is a plain declaration that he was no impostor: for though you may fancy a man tickled with so much vain-glory, that he will not stick to embrace death, when he cannot evade it, rather than unsay what he hath published, though he know it to be false; yet this is all that can with any colour be supposed. No such person can be conceived willing to seek death, to offer himself to it, to go to the very place where he knows it waits for him, (when he may as well avoid it,) and designedly put himself into those hands which it is apparent are resolved to kill him. No; though fame be his design, yet the preservation of his life, without all doubt, is his greater concernment: and if he can he will enjoy both, his fame together with his life.

But if anybody will be so extravagant as to fancy that he might intend to get fame, even by running himself into this danger; let him observe further, (2) what our Saviour met withal in his passage to his death, which would have stopped such vain forwardness. For there was something so dreadful appeared to him in the way to his passion, that when it approached *he fell into an agony.* A great horror seized on him, which declared how much nature was against his proceeding: whose strong and violent inclinations would have prevailed against a fancy and vain humour; if he had not known that he was engaged in a good cause, and did not deceive the world. Such terrible apprehensions as then presented themselves would have made him take the opportunity of the night, and consult for his safety; if he had been a deceiver, and not very well assured that this was the way to everlasting life.

And then, if you consider again (3) that he was not hastily hurried to the gibbet, but had a long time to weigh what he was about to suffer, it will seem incredible that he should not repent of his obstinacy, if he had been conscious to himself of any falsehood. For though in a sudden heat of mad zeal a man may be supposed so foolish as to maintain an untruth with the hazard of his life, yet the sight of long continued torments for a great while before his eyes would make him in all likelihood confess the truth.

But (4) that which quite overthrows this idle supposition is, that the kind of his death was such as could procure him nothing less than glory and fame; there being nothing more infamous and reproachful than to die like a vile slave upon a cross. This he could not but foresee would expose him to the scorn of all the world, did not something else gain him more credit than this could do disgrace. And so it proved afterward; notwithstanding all the miracles he had wrought, his crucifixion was the laughter of the Gentiles, and a stumblingblock to the Jews. From whence we may conclude that, if we will but allow him to be a man of common sense, he would not have taken this way of all other to procure fame. No course he could have thought of to propagate his doctrine would have been more mad than this, if it were not taken, as in all reason it ought to be, for a token of his sincerity and truth in what he preached: which would be published, he knew, to his immortal honour and glory in all the world.

But dying such a death as he did, there could be no hope, it must be further considered, (5) that his doctrine should be so much as published by his followers, much less received by others, unless he were both sure himself that it was the truth, and that he could make the truth of it appear to them. And then what would have become of all the glory, for which it is supposed he might be tempted to part with his life? All that he could do to secure his disciples that he preached nothing but the truth, and to encourage them also to preach Christ crucified, (which was a most odious and dangerous undertaking,) was to tell them that he would rise again the third day, and appear alive to them. Now it is as manifest as the sun, that if he knew himself to be an impostor, he could have no hope that God would raise him up again: and it is as manifest on the other side, that if he did not rise again, there was no hope that his apostles would preach him, because he had proved himself a liar: and if he was not preached by them, there could be no hope of glory and fame; and, consequently, he would never have died in expectation of that, which, if he did but abuse the world, he knew could not possibly attend upon his name. For it is visible it must either have been buried in silence, or else remembered with reproach; he himself having blasted it by failing in the performance of his word.

But I have said enough of this, and therefore shall consider only one thing more, (6) what it was that comforted our Saviour and supported his spirit upon the cross. Was it the hopes he had to be cried up by his followers, and magnified every where, when he was dead and gone, for a man of an invincible spirit? No, he comforted himself with the thoughts of his own integrity: he humbly addressed himself in prayer to God: he relieved himself with the thoughts that he was his Father; to whom therefore he commends his spirit, and breathed out his soul in a pious confidence that he would receive it, and glorify him in the heavens. For, a little before he suffered, he lift up his eyes thither, as St. John testifies, and said, *Father, the hour is come; glorify thy Son, that thy Son may glorify thee, &c. I have glorified thee on earth: I have finished the work which thou gavest me to do. And now, O Father, glorify thou me with thy own self with the glory I had with thee before the world was*[i]. And when the moment of his departure was come, and he was just expiring on the cross, *he cried with a loud voice*, that all might hear him, *Father, into thy hands I commend my spirit. And having thus said, he gave up the ghost.*

He that shall impute all this also to vain-glory, we may rather conclude takes a pride in cavilling and contradicting: and hath lost all sense of the nature of man, which finds no inclinations in it to be thus audacious. For how can he repose any hope in God, who at that very instant when he expresses it is committing the greatest open affront unto him imaginable? Our blessed Saviour was ever a devout worshipper of him, and in all his ways acknowledged him: and therefore, since he did thus seriously betake himself to him in his sorest distress, it is apparent he was persuaded of his own sincerity and truth: which God, the searcher of all hearts knew; to whom therefore he appeals, and was confident he should live with him for ever, and be able to give eternal life to others.

III. But what need is there to insist any longer upon such considerations as these, when his doctrine (which is the second thing I mentioned) is so holy and pure, so heavenly and divine, that the constant preacher of such things could not be guilty

[i] John xvii. 1, 4, 5.

of so great an impiety as to call the God of heaven at last to bear witness to a known untruth? No; it condemns lesser lies to so severe a punishment, that to say he was sent of God with the words of eternal life, nay, was *the way, the truth, and the life,* when he knew he was not, deserved, according to his own sentence, the heaviest condemnation.

To which if you add the manner of his life, which was the last thing, it will complete the demonstration. For it was so perfectly conformable to his doctrine, that we cannot but think he believed it; and so could not die with a lie in his mouth. Particularly, it was so free from all covetous designs, and from hunting after the applause and praise of men, that it is incredible he should seek that by death, which he had despised through the whole course of his life. If he was so thirsty of vain-glory as to lose his life for it, why did he not make it his business to win all he could of it while he lived? Why did he not lay the foundation of his after-fame, by insinuating himself, in the most diligent and men-pleasing manner, into the favour of all the Jewish nation? and conform himself so perfectly to their humour, that they might have presently made him their king? Nay, why did he not accept the offer, when the people intended to advance him to the throne? This had been a more likely way to honour and renown, if that was all his aim, than the lifting him up upon a cross. He might have hoped to build a lasting glory on the love of the scribes and elders of the people: whereas this infamous death, he could not but see, would make him so odious, that it would rob him of all men's good word, and quite frustrate the design of winning a reputation among men. This is a truth of which I presume, by this time, the most suspicious and unbelieving are convinced: who cannot but confess that the voluntary death of such a person as this, and a death so horrid and ignominious, is a plain testimony of his sincerity; and proves, beyond any reasonable contradiction, that he did not invent his doctrine himself, but believed it to be of God, and did not seek to gain any thing by it but immortal life and glory in the world to come.

IV. Now that we must needs be great gainers hereby as well as himself, will appear, if you consider that he came into the world on purpose to do mankind good, as the business of his whole life testifies. He *went about doing good*, and sought all

occasions of obliging even the most ungrateful. He had compassion on every body he met withal, and never denied a cure to those that begged it, though they were never so poor and contemptible. He employed his disciples also, who attended on him, in the same charitable works, of healing all manner of diseases, and casting out unclean spirits. He bade them go and speak *peace unto every house* into which they entered. And as for themselves, he professed the greatest love imaginable to them, as they themselves have recorded. He called them his *friends*, and did not use them as *servants;* nay, his *children*, and at last his *brethren:* which are all terms of much kindness and tenderness, which he ever expressed towards them. From whence I conclude that, unless he could have served them better by his death than by his longer life, he would not have so soon and so willingly gone to the cross, and there left these dear friends, for whose sake he had hitherto lived more than his own. If he had not died for their sake too, and been certain he should thereby show more love to them, and do them better service than any other way, he would have been as much inclined to stay still with them as they were to desire it.

He saw how loath they were to part with him; and with what sad countenances and troubled spirits they received the news. He was encompassed with sighs and groans when he did but mention it; for *sorrow* (as he speaks John xvi. 6.) *had filled their hearts.* Would not this have moved a heart less tender than his to alter this resolution, when it was in his power to stay longer with them? How could he endure to see their tears flow so fast, when he was able to dry them up with the speaking but one word, that he would not leave them? If he had not been sure that he was *going*, as he told them, *to his Father*, and that it was on purpose *to prepare a place for them*, which ought to have made them *rejoice* rather than weep, because *he would come again, and receive them to himself, that where he was, there they might be also*[1]; without all doubt his great love would have yielded to their prayers, and commanded his power to prolong their happiness in his company. He should be able, he verily believed, to do greater

[1] John xiv. 1, 2, 3, 28.

wonders for them, and bestow greater blessings upon them, if he did not hearken to their importunities; or else we cannot but think (if we measure him by ourselves) he would have still continued with these his dear companions: especially since none, as he professed, could snatch him from their society, but it was his own free choice to leave them.

V. And he earnestly desired them to believe as much, and to look upon his *blood* as the seal of a new covenant, which contained better promises than the former, between God and men. So he said, just before his death, when he spoke of the representation of it, *This is my blood of the new testament* (or *covenant*) *which is shed for many for the remission of sins*[m]. And so the apostles believed and spake of his *blood* in the same terms; when, by his resurrection from the dead, they saw that it was *the blood of the covenant*[n], and that he was most eminent for this above all other things, as the expression is Heb. xiii. 20, where the apostle calls him the *Shepherd of the sheep, τὸν μέγαν ἐν αἵματι διαθήκης αἰωνίου, who was great in the blood of the everlasting covenant.* Now this is one article every body knows, (one of the promises contained in it,) that we shall as certainly have *eternal life*, as Israel in due time was brought to the possession of the good land God promised to their fathers.

Abraham, you read[o], had the word of God for it, that he would give his posterity the land of Canaan, into which he had brought him out of Chaldæa. And when he made so bold as to ask how he should know that this was true, you find[p] that God passed this promise into a covenant, which was made by the blood of sundry beasts: whose bodies being divided, and the halves laid one against another, *a smoking furnace* appeared, and *a lamp of fire*, (representing a divine presence,) which passed between those pieces[q], according to the custom in those days of making covenants, by the parties going between a beast so cut asunder. In like manner our blessed Lord and Saviour promised more than once or twice the *kingdom of heaven* to all his followers, most earnestly entreating them to believe it. And lest they should doubt of it, he proceeds at

[m] Matt. xxvi. 28. [n] Heb. x. 29. [o] Gen. xv. 7.
[p] Ver. 9—11. [q] Ver. 17.

last, of his own accord, to engage himself to bestow it, by entering into a solemn covenant with them. Which was ratified not by the blood of beasts, and the cutting their bodies in pieces, but by his own most *precious blood*, and by suffering nails to be thrust through his own flesh, that he might confirm us in the belief of his *promise of an eternal inheritance*[r].

VI. And great reason there is we should be confirmed by it in this belief: for what could he do more to assure us he meant as he spake, than to seal it with his blood? The apostles justly took this to be τὸ μαρτύριον, an eminent testimony or *witness* to the truth of that which he preached. So you read[s], *He gave himself a ransom for all*, τὸ μαρτύριον καιροῖς ἰδίοις, *a testimony in due time.* That is, "he became the price of our redemption, and, like the paschal lamb, his blood saves us from the destroyer, and assures us God will bring us to our eternal rest: of which we cannot reasonably doubt, since his giving himself thus to die for us is an evident testimony of God's great love to men, and of his *will* (which he spake of before[t]) *to save all men*, by pardoning their offences, and bringing them to eternal life for Jesus his sake. His bloody death was an unquestionable *witness*, as St. John here calls it, of the truth of his promise; which he confirmed and sealed in this solemn manner, by dying on the cross to verify it. And this he did at that very time or season which was most fit and proper for such a business: (just when the prophets said he should do it:) for in those days (as we read[u]) *they looked for redemption in Jerusalem.*"

And he could not satisfy their expectations by any better means than this, which was *illud testimonium*, as Erasmus renders it, 'that testimony,' that remarkable *witness* which none can justly question: for it is taken by all for certain, that he doth not intend to deceive, *qui morte sua fidem facit*, 'who seals what he saith with his blood.' This μαρτύριον, 'testimony,' I may add, or *witness* to the truth of what he preached, was most properly his own testimony. There were sundry others; but none, while he was on earth, so peculiarly his as this: which was all he could do to justify himself and his doctrine. The *voice from heaven* was a witness, as you have heard, but

[r] Heb. ix. 15. [s] 1 Tim. ii. 6. [t] Ver. 4. [u] Luke ii. 38.

that was the testimony of the Father. His doctrine was a witness; but he saith of that, *it is not mine, but his that sent me*[v]. His works or miracles were a witness, as he says John v. 36; but, in the same place, he adds, that they were *the works which his Father gave him to finish;* and xiv. 10, *My Father doth the works.* But as for his most precious *blood*, it was that, and that alone, whereby he himself witnessed the truth to us. *For this cause he came into the world*, as he tells Pilate[x], and it was a free act of his own; for which reason he is said to *give himself* for us, and to *lay down* his life; there being none, as I said before, that had power, without his consent, to take it away from him. And therefore it may well be called τὸ μαρτύριον, *that testimony*, whereby he more peculiarly witnessed, that *this was the will of him that sent him, that every one who saw the Son, and believed on him, should have everlasting life.* This he preached all his life, and he justified it to be true by his death. When they would have had him revoke what he had said, and deny that he was sent upon this message by God, he maintained it to the last drop of his blood: which was as much as could be done for the verifying of his doctrine, and assuring the world that he sincerely published the will of Heaven. For who can do more than die for the truth which he asserts?

But he having thus attested by dying that which God the Father had witnessed before in his lifetime by voices from heaven, by signs and wonders, and such like things, it pleased the same Father Almighty to give a more illustrious testimony to him, and to the truth of his doctrine, than ever had been given either in his life or at his death; and that was by his resurrection from the dead. Which is commonly in the holy Scriptures ascribed to him, and made his work[y]; and evidently proved all that I have said, and more too: for it showed, that as he was not a deceiver of others, so he was not deceived himself. God hereby bade all the world believe what he had preached, and no longer make any doubt of that which he had testified, even by his own *blood*, to be his heavenly truth. But of this more in its proper place.

[v] John vii. 16. [x] xviii. 37.
[y] Acts ii. 24, 32; Ephes. i. 17, 20, &c.

VII. Let us now consider that those persons whom our Saviour bade all men hear, because they were sent by him, as he was by the Father, have told us, (and the event proved it true,) that this *blood* was shed *to make peace*, as you read Ephes. ii. 14, 15: that is, to reconcile Jews and Gentiles together, between whom there had been very long differences, so that of twain they might become one new man, and both serve him in the same religion, and partake of the same privileges. What force there is in this to prove the right we have to *eternal life* you will soon see, when I have noted, that the intention of God to bring all the world to share alike in his divine favour and love, which had been so much inclosed in the Jewish nation, was notably proclaimed by *the rending of the veil of the temple in twain*, just when the veil of our Saviour's flesh was torn, and he yielded up the ghost[z]. This was a plain indication, as Photius, the famous patriarch of Constantinople, hath truly observed[a], a "symbol and presignification," to use his words, of the overthrow and desolation that was coming upon that temple, and the worship therein celebrated. How could it be otherwise construed, when that place wherein their most holy rites were performed, and their most venerable mysteries kept from the eyes of the vulgar, was now laid open and exposed εἰς κοινὴν θέαν καὶ βεβήλωσιν, as his words are, "to common view and profanation?"

This was a preface, as he calls it, to the utter subversion and extinction of the rest of their ordinances and their legal worship. The consequence of which was, as he likewise notes, that the knowledge and service of God, according to the law, which had been so long circumscribed and shut up in one city and country, being to be abolished; that worship which by the passion of our Saviour was revealed, was to be established and spread to the uttermost parts of the earth. And therefore the rending of the veil did as good as proclaim to all the world, and cry with a loud voice, saying, Come hither, and behold the invisible things. Come εἰς θείαν ἔποψιν, to the sight of the divine mysteries, from whence you have been so long excluded. Here is free leave for you all to enter, who have as much right as any to that which before was inaccessible.

[z] Matt. xxvii. 50, 51. [a] Epist. cxxv. [p. 165.]

And since this most holy place was a type of heaven, (God commanding Moses to make all things according to the pattern in the mount,) the shutting up of this from the people, and hiding the things contained in it by a veil drawn before their eyes, was an acknowledgment that by the legal worship there was no entrance into the heavens; but the way was unpassable by those that stuck only to its rites and ceremonies. And therefore the tearing of this veil, by the death of Christ, signified as plainly that the obstacle was removed; and preached to the world, as with the sound of a trumpet, that every one of us, by his *blood*, may hope to come thither. For he that emptied himself for this very cause, as the same Photius writes, and took upon him our flesh, and suffered all things for our sake, Christ, I mean, our God, hath opened a new passage into the kingdom of heaven by his life-giving death: which both dissolved that old religion, (as the very same thing you see foresignified,) and introduced such an one as will certainly bring us into the high and holy place, whither Jesus, our forerunner, is entered for us.

And that this tearing of the veil in sunder was the effect of our Saviour's passion and precious *blood*-shedding, is visible from the relation which the evangelical story makes of this prodigy. So I call it, because you read that it was not rent from the *bottom* to the *top*, as it would have been if the earthquake (as some may be prone to suspect) had been the cause of it; but *from the top to the bottom* [b]. This evidently shows it was an hand from above that made this breach: which following immediately upon our Saviour's giving up the ghost, was as sensible a token that it depended upon no other cause but that. The most impious are not able to devise any other reason of so strange an accident. Which could have no natural cause, (as an earthquake may,) but proceed from a *θεομηνία*, (as Photius his phrase is,) 'divine vengeance,' which gave the veil this stroke, and cut it quite in two; as an indelible proof that it was the *blood* of an innocent person which they now had shed. And indeed the earthquake there mentioned was so far from being the cause of this rent, that it followed after it: that power from on high which first slit the veil, next of all shaking the earth, and cleaving the rocks in sunder.

[b] Matt. xxvii. 51.

To which I think it may be fit to add, that the Jews themselves tell us, the gates of the temple used after this to open of their own accord forty years before its destruction[c]. Which made R. Jochanan ben Zaccai[d] cry out, "O temple, temple, why dost thou affright thyself? I know that thou shalt be destroyed in the end; for Zachariah prophesied of thee, *Open thy doors, O Lebanon, that the fire may devour thy cedars*[e]." Which new prodigy, confessed by many of their writers, together with the extinction of the lamp that used to burn there, was a witness that God was going away from that place, and intended no longer to dwell in it; but would show his glory, which for many years had heretofore filled that house, to all the earth.

Now then, if the partition-wall was thus broken down through the *blood* of Jesus, and all laid open and common, that we might enter upon the possession of the divine promises as well as others; it is certain, by the witness of this *blood*, that there is an heavenly inheritance for us, for earthly there is none. Either we must obtain *eternal life* by him that died for us, or nothing at all. For there is no land of Canaan, nor any thing like it, given to us Gentiles, who are now called to inherit the promises. We have no assurance of any worldly purchases; no portion of money, vineyards, oliveyards, or other goods of that nature assigned to us, as there was to the ancient Israelites. But quite contrary, they that enjoyed the very *first-fruits* of the divine love were told that *every one who would live godly in Christ Jesus must suffer persecution*, and *take up their cross*, and *forsake all*, if they would be his followers. Accordingly we have examples of those who sold their lands, and when they had done, gave away the price of them: so far were they from thinking of any temporal rewards. Undoubtedly then, the blessing which Jesus purchased for us by his *blood*, whereby he laid waste all former inclosures, can be nothing else but great possessions in another world; where we have the promise of an eternal inheritance. This we ought to expect with the most assured confidence: for we cannot make any doubt of it,

[c] Tzemach David ad an. 3785. [p. 89, et vid. David. Ganz. in loc. p. 285.]

[d] [Apud Martin. Pug. fid. part. 2. cap. 8. § 18. p. 370.]

[e] Zech. xi. 1.

unless we will look upon the *blood* of Jesus as more ineffectual than the blood of bulls and goats, whereby they held the earthly Canaan.

VIII. And now let us once more look upon the *blood* of Jesus as the *blood of a sacrifice;* whereby all covenants were anciently sealed, and without which there could be no entrance, no not for the high-priest himself, into the holy place where God dwelt. Those inspired persons, whom, as I said before, our Saviour bids all men hear and reverence, frequently call his death by this name. And common reason also leads us to have the same thoughts of it. For if it was not the *blood* of the most precious and acceptable sacrifice which he offered upon the cross, how could it put an end, as it hath done, to all the old sacrifices, which had stood so long by God's appointment; and make all the blood that was afterward offered of no force at all for their preservation from ruin? That it did so, is manifest by the experience of near sixteen hundred years. And the Hebrew writers themselves confess, that the "scarlet tongue[f]," (as they call it,) that is, the list of that colour and figure which was hung between the scapegoat's horns, or, as others will have it, at the door of the temple, and always used to turn white, according to that in Isaiah i. 8, would never alter for forty years before the destruction of the temple, but still continued red on the great day of expiation. Which if it be true, (as we have their own faith for it,) was a shrewd token, that their most excellent sacrifices were now able to do them no service; and that their sins were of so deep a dye, having crucified the Prince of life, that nothing in the old religion could purify them. In vain did they expect to hear that tongue speaking peace to them, which was wont to publish good tidings; for it still looked as red as blood, and told them there was no hope for them but in Jesus, who alone could make their crimson sins as white as wool.

By his bloody death they might sue out a pardon of those very crimes which they had committed against himself. For it, being a sacrifice, was for the remission of sins: or else the world had been in a worse case than it was before, now that all other

[f] [The reader is referred to an elaborate treatise on this Rabbinical tradition by Cartwright (Crit. Sacr. tom. iii. p. 1403.)]

blood to cleanse them was quite taken away. And there was no reason to doubt but God was perfectly well pleased and satisfied with this one sacrifice of his; else he would not have raised him from the dead, nor admitted him into the heavens, where, as he himself hath since declared, he appears in the presence of God, and by virtue of his sacrifice makes perpetual intercession for us. Now this plainly infers (as hath been said before) the hope of eternal life. For if there be *remission of sins*, then we are restored to the state of innocence again. We are put into the state and condition of the sons of God; and there is nothing to hinder our being re-possessed of *paradise* and the *tree of life*. To which we not being restored in this world, it remains that we be admitted to it and reinstated in it in another.

IX. Unto all which let the consideration of the time be added when our Saviour suffered: for that is not without its instruction in this business, but contributes something to the confirmation of our faith. It was at the feast of unleavened bread, (as they themselves cannot deny,) a solemn time appointed by God to be observed at their departure out of Egypt; when they were ransomed by a mighty hand, and purchased to be God's peculiar people; and began their journey towards the land of Canaan, which he had promised to their forefathers. At this feast, it is well known, a lamb, immaculate and pure, was ordered to be slain; whose blood was that which saved them from the strokes of the angel of death, who destroyed the Egyptians. Now our Lord, the *Lamb of God without spot and blemish*, the *Lamb of God that takes away the sins of the world*, (as St. John Baptist testified,) being slain at this very time, and hanging on the cross after the same fashion wherein the paschal lamb was wont to be killed; it was a testimony clear enough to those that observed and laid things together, that his *blood* was their ransom from a greater slavery, and was shed to deliver them from eternal death and destruction; and, after they had travelled a while through the wilderness, as I may call it, of this world, and overcome there all difficulties and temptations, would procure their entrance into a better and more glorious rest than that wherein they were.

The holy man who writes the Epistle to the Hebrews proves

unanswerably[g], that the *rest* into which Joshua brought the children of Israel was not all that good men expected, and which God intended to bestow upon them. For if that great captain had brought them to their final rest, there would not have been mention made by the inspired Psalmist, many years after their settlement in Canaan, of *another rest, which*, as the words there are, *remaineth for the people of God*. Now who can pretend to be the *captain of their salvation*, to conduct them thither, but only our blessed Saviour? whose name is the same with that of the ancient Joshua, or Jesus; who was baptized at that very place where they entered into their rest in the promised land; to whom the heavens there opened, and God the Father spake by an audible voice, and the Holy Ghost fell down in a visible shape; who at last, after many promises and assurances that he would bring them to the heavenly country, was offered at that very time when their forefathers began their travels to their resting-place; and hereby sealed what he had promised by his blood, as God the Father sealed to it by divers acts of his, that he was a Lamb without spot, *an offering and a sacrifice to him of a sweet-smelling savour*.

Well might St. Paul call him *our passover* that *is sacrificed for us*[h]. For it is as visible that he was slain for the salvation of mankind as that the paschal lamb was slain for the preservation of Israel; and that as the destroying angel passed over those houses where he found the blood of that lamb upon the door-posts, and spared the lives of the inhabitants, so all those souls that are sprinkled with the blood of Jesus (i. e. believe on him) shall be delivered by him from perishing, and preserved to eternal life. Which salvation he procured by offering himself freely as *our passover;* that is, for the like end (but as much excelling as eternal life doth temporary) for which the paschal lamb was sacrificed. And he made his sacrifice the more remarkable, by offering it at that very time when the other was offered, and when they themselves expected it: for some of the Jews say expressly, which adds much weight to this observation, that on the same day of the month Nisan, Israel shall be redeemed in the days of the Mes-

[g] Heb. iv. [h] 1 Cor. v. 7.

siah, on which they were redeemed when God wonderfully brought them out of the land of Egypt.

Now our Saviour made good his word, which he had often passed, that he would give them his very *flesh to eat*, whereby they might feast with him, as they had done that day on the paschal lamb[i]. He gave them also his very *blood to drink*, which was the price of their redemption, that which saved them from the destroyer, and overcame those enemies which opposed their entrance into the eternal rest. For *his flesh*, (as he speaks[k],) being offered on the cross, *was meat indeed, and his blood drink indeed.* That is, the most perfect food and excellent nutriment; which hath a power to give (not a temporary, as the paschal lamb did, but) an eternal life to those that partake of it by a lively faith in him. Some of the Jews themselves thought there was some greater mystery in the passover than the commemoration of their deliverance out of Egypt, and say expressly, that then God communicated his divinity to men. They are the words of R. Judah[l]: "By the sacrifice of the passover God joins men so closely to himself, that they are one with him, as light is with a candle." Which had little truth in it, till *Christ our passover was sacrificed for us;* when the mystery was explained, and he invited all men to come and *eat of his flesh, and drink of his blood*, and thereby have such a fellowship with him in his death, that he might communicate to them his life. For τοῦτ' ἔστι τὸ αἷμα τοῦ Ἰησοῦ, τῆς Κυριακῆς μεταλαβεῖν ἀφθαρσίας, as Clemens Alex. speaks[m]; 'this is to drink the blood of Jesus, to partake of the Lord's immortality.'

And so our Lord explains himself, when he adds, in the next words[n], *As the living Father* (who, being the Author of life, can give it again to the dead,) *hath sent me, and I live by the Father*, (shall rise again, though I give my flesh to be slain;) *so he that eateth me* (believeth on me, though crucified) *shall live by me;* that is, be raised again to life by me, as I by the Father: for *he gave his flesh* (as he says at the beginning of this discourse[o]), that is, delivered it to be made a bloody sacri-

[i] Vid. P. Fagium in Exod. xii. 13. [inter Critic. Sacr. col. 203.]
[k] John vi. 55.
[l] Apud Masium in John v. 10. [inter Critic. Sacr. col. 118.]
[m] L. 11. Pædag. cap. 2. [p. 177.]
[n] John vi. 57.
[o] Ver. 51.

fice, *for the life of the world*, i. e. that all mankind might have remission of sins and eternal life: which he will as certainly give to those who do not refuse to participate of this sacrifice by believing in him, as the Father of life raised him from the dead to live for evermore. These words seemed hard to some of his disciples[p], who could not understand that there should be such virtue in his flesh as to give life unto the world. But our Lord tells them there was no cause of being offended at this discourse; for, if they would but stay a while, they should be convinced that he did not ascribe too much to it: *What and if ye shall see the Son of man ascend up where he was before*[q]*?* That is, "What will you say if you behold me raised up from the dead, and ascend into heaven, where I was before I took this flesh? Will you not then confess that my death (which is meant by his *giving his flesh* to them) had an exceeding great virtue in it, being so acceptable to God as to be thus highly rewarded? Will it then seem incredible to you that I should obtain thereby a power to raise the dead and to give eternal life? This, sure, will be a convincing argument that I have not said too much of my *blood*, nor promised greater things than it can do for you. You will then, if you consider it, join yourselves heartily to me, though now you are ready to fly off, and not think my cross such a scandal that it should hinder you from being Christians."

X. And that will be one of our next works, in the following chapter, to show the power of Christ's resurrection to persuade us that, by his death, he will give life to the world. Let us first only briefly consider that there are some other circumstances, besides this now mentioned, which declare there was something exceeding remarkable in the sufferings of Christ on the cross to procure him great glory: for we find that Nicodemus, one of their senators, who durst not publicly own our Saviour while he was in great favour with the people, came, now that he was crucified and exposed to scorn, and *brought a mixture of myrrh and aloes, about an hundred pound weight*[r], to honour his corpse withal. Which would be a stronger argument of the thorough conviction already wrought in his mind, if there be any truth in the conjecture of a learned

[p] John vi. 60. [q] Ver. 62. [r] xix. 39.

man[s], that these spices were intended not to embalm him, but, as the manner was upon great occasions, to burn at his funeral. Thus far he is certainly in the right, that the honour of having sweet spices burnt at their funerals appertained to no other persons but only their kings[t], and the head of all the doctors, the Nasi, as they called him, of their academies. And he notes likewise truly out of Joseph ben Gorion, that when the funeral pomp of Herod the Great was carried forth, fifty of his servants are said to have scattered all the way they went those very things which Nicodemus brought, viz. myrrh and aloes, and all other sweet spices. But whether we can hence conclude that Nicodemus now honoured him by these as the *King of Israel*, and the *Prince of all the prophets*, I cannot tell, because the evangelist seems to tell us[u] that the use they made of these spices was to embalm his body, which *they wound in linen cloths, with the spices, as the manner of the Jews was to bury*. Yet this we may safely conclude, that he would never have put himself to so great a charge, and laid out so much upon his dead body, if he had not seen something which convinced him that this was *that King of Israel*, who would give him a reward for his love and open confession of him in his heavenly kingdom. There was nothing to move him to such an expense, upon such an hated person, but only a persuasion that Jesus was what he pretended; and an assured hope that by this flesh, which now lay dead, the world should be restored to life.

Yea, such power there was in his death to affect men's hearts, that not only the centurion confessed him to be *a righteous man*, but all the people who were come together to that sight, beholding the things that accompanied his sufferings, were pricked in their consciences, and *smote their breasts*[v]. They could not, that is, but express their sorrow for this horrid fact of shedding his *blood*, and dread the dismal consequences of it. Insomuch that, though it was forbidden by the constitutions of the Sanhedrim[w] to make any lamentations for a malefactor, yet they were not able, on this occasion,

[s] Jac. Alting. Schilo, l. iv. [cap. 24. Opp. tom. v. p. 103.]

[t] 2 Chron. xvi. ult.

[u] John xix. 40.

[v] Luke xxiii. 47, 48.

[w] Gem. Sanh. c. vi. [§ 6. apud J. Cocceium, in duos tit. Talmud. Opp. tom. ix. p. 157.]

to forbear it. Their own writers tell us that it was a part of the honour they did to a deserving person, when his funeral was carried out, to accompany him with sighs, and groans, and tears, and beating themselves, and such like tokens of their inward grief for his loss. With which the holy Scripture agrees, when it names this as part of the curse of God upon Jehoiakim, that none should so much as sigh at his burial, nor make the usual lamentation, saying, *Ah my brother! Ah lord! or, Ah his glory*[x]*!* From whence it is likely they passed a decree, that when any person suffered by a public sentence for a crime, none should presume to grace him with any ceremony, nor use the least outward sign of heaviness, though in their hearts they might mourn for him. But this decree and custom, settled by the authority of their supreme court, the esteem which our Saviour won to himself, even when he hung upon his cross, forced the people to break. Their affection to him was stronger than all laws; and they could not contain themselves when they saw what testimonies heaven gave of his innocence and virtue; but did him public honour even at the very place of execution. Though he suffered as the highest and vilest offender in the world, yet the honest-hearted spectators were not only inwardly troubled in their breasts at the sight, but beat or knocked them also; and showed thereby that they were not afraid to own him as a most excellent person, whose death they ought to accompany with the bitterest lamentations.

And so much may suffice concerning the testimony of his *blood;* which no man can hear speak a word, but he must needs think that which got him such honour among the people in the midst of his shame and the reproach of the cross, obtained a far greater glory for him with God in the heavens, who best knew how to value his obedience.

"O wonderful passion, the expiation of the world! O death, the cause of immortality, and the origin of life! O descent into hell, the bridge by which those who were dead passed into heaven! O noon, which hath revoked the afternoon sentence against us in paradise! O cross, the cure of the fatal tree! O nails, which wounded death, and joined the world to the know-

[x] Jer. xxii. 18.

ledge of God." . . . "Great was the victory which he that was incarnate for us obtained on the day of his passion. He grappled with death when he was dead. Hell and the grave this day ignorantly swallowed a deadly morsel. To-day death received him dead who always lives. To-day the chains were loosed which the serpent made in paradise. The thief this day made a breach on paradise, which had been guarded by the flaming sword some thousands of years. This day our Lord broke the gates of brass, and cut the bars of iron in sunder[y].

"Which of the great men, that ancient times boast of, are comparable to him? All the just fell under the power of death, and none could conquer it. Abraham, Isaac, and Jacob are all turned to dust and ashes. The memory of Joseph, in whom the Jews glory, lay in his dry bones, which they carried out of Egypt with them. Moses is extolled by them to the skies, but there is not so much as his tomb to be found. Such as these, and so many, death devoured and swallowed them all down. . . . But at last it swallowed one, and against its will vomited up the whole world: who now triumph over it, and cry with a loud voice, *O death, where is thy sting? O grave, where is thy victory? Thanks be to God, which giveth us the victory through Jesus Christ our Lord.*

"His passion is our impassibility: his death is our immortality: his tears our joy: his burial our resurrection: his baptism our purification: his stripes our healing: his chastisement our peace: his reproach our glory[z]." How much are we indebted to him, who from first to last consulted our happiness! "For he descended, that he might make way for our ascent. He was born, that he might make us friends with the unbegotten. He took on him our infirmities, that we might be raised in power, and say with St. Paul, *I can do all things, through Christ which strengtheneth me.* He took on him a corruptible body, that this corruption might put on incorruption. He put on mortality, that it might be changed into immortal. In fine, he was made man and died, that we who

[y] Proclus, Homil. xl. [Auct. Nov. Biblioth. patr. Græco-Lat. per Combefim, tom. i. pp. 411, 2.]

[z] S. Athanasius περὶ ἐνσάρκου ἐπιφαν. p. 598. [ed. Ben. tom. i. p. 874 A.]

die as men might be deified, and death might no longer reign over us[a]."

O blessed and life-giving cross of our Saviour, which triumphed over death, and destroyed him that had the power of it, which is the devil! O divine Word, and true wisdom of the Father! "thou hast overcome the devil, when he thought he had been a conqueror[b]." "O lover of men, and gracious Lord! thou hast both redeemed us that were captives, and freed us, by thy own death, who were servants of sin. O Son of God, the true peacemaker! thou hast both given us the adoption of sons, and reconciled us to thy Father; having destroyed the enmity by thy flesh. O rich Saviour, and true King! who becamest poor, that we by thy poverty might be made rich, and hast given to us the kingdom of heaven. O creator and former of all things, the Word of the Father! for thou hast created us again; we are thy workmanship, created unto good works. O light indeed, the brightness of the Father! for thou hast enlightened us that were in darkness, and hast brought us that were blind to see the light. O likeness and real image of the Father! for thou hast formed us who were lost, and again restored the image of God in us. O God, the word and life indeed! for thou hast quickened us who were dead, and renewed us that were corrupted, and clothed us with immortality. O thou power indeed, the arm, the right hand of the Father! for thou hast both loosed the bands of death, and broken the prison doors in pieces."

"God forbid that we should glory, save in the cross of our Lord Jesus Christ. To this let us adhere; let us walk worthy of this. And thus living and believing, we shall know also his assumption into the heavens, and his session on the right hand of the Majesty on high. We shall behold the subjection of angels to him, and his coming again with glory: which angels have foretold; which saints sing of in their hymns; and which when we all see, we shall rejoice and be exceeding glad in Christ Jesus. By whom be glory and dominion to the Father, world without end[c]. Amen."

[a] Id. *περὶ πάθους*, &c. p. 1002. [p. 89 C.]

[b] August. de Trinitate, l. xiii. c. 15. [tom. viii. col. 940.] Cæt. ex Athanasio p. 1022. [ed. Ben. p. 105 B.]

[c] Ib. p. 1028. [p. 109 F.]

CHAP. XI.

Concerning the testimony of the Spirit, the third witness on earth.

Though the children of Israel were so strangely delivered out of their bondage, being saved by the blood of the paschal lamb from the destroying angel, and then freed from Pharaoh, who thought, it is like, that his blood must next of all pay for the keeping them in Egypt; yet still they questioned whether they should come into the good land or no, and were at a sad plunge when they came to the Red Sea, imagining that they themselves should be there destroyed, and become the next sacrifice to Pharaoh's cruelty. To confirm them therefore in their belief of God's kind intentions towards them, and persuade them thoroughly that Moses had not brought them out of Egypt to kill them, but to save them, he gave him power to do great wonders at that place, and in the rest of their journey; which, added to the miracles in Egypt, were a strong conviction that God was among them, and was conducting them, by the hands of his servant, to their long desired rest. This was the last argument, and the most constant, whereby he demonstrated the truth and reality of his promises of bringing them to the land of Canaan. They saw *his signs and his wonders, his mighty power and stretched out arm, all the great acts of the Lord;* as they are called Deut. xi. 7, (which chapter be pleased to read unto that verse;) which were eminent tokens that God had taken them to be a peculiar or special people to himself, as he frequently speaks, and was able to fulfil his word to their forefathers, of giving them the land, wherein they were then strangers, for their inheritance.

Just such as this is our case, whom he hath called by his Son to *an inheritance incorruptible and that fadeth not away, reserved in heaven for us.* To obtain an eternal redemption for us, and deliver us out of the hands of all our enemies, his own most precious blood was shed, as of *a lamb without spot or blemish.* Whereby also, as you have heard, he testified to the world that he was no deceiver, but came to them from God with the words of eternal life. Many things concurred to make this blood a witness of his truth, and of his power to

fulfil his own promises. And yet, notwithstanding, this was the very thing that offended many, and kept them from following him. They could not endure so much as to hear him speak of giving them *his flesh to eat, and his blood to drink;* though he told them thereby he would *give life to the world.* And therefore to strengthen this testimony of his blood, and to convince them evidently that he was the Lamb of God that taketh away the sin of the world, and gives life to it, there was another witness which attended to it, both before his blood was shed, and likewise afterward; which was the *Spirit:* that is, as I showed in the former treatise on this subject [d], the power he had to work wonders, and the miraculous power which raised him from the dead, and presented him to God in the heavens. This was abundantly sufficient to prevent any offence they might take at Christ crucified, and to settle in their hearts an unmovable belief that he was their mighty Redeemer, who would bring them to the eternal rest which he had promised. For this is the last and greatest argument which St. John here produces, *He came not only by water, but by blood also; and it is the Spirit that beareth witness, for the Spirit is the truth*[c]. Or, as Arias Montanus translates it, *the Spirit is* (τὸ μαρτυροῦν) *that witness,* that undoubted testimony on which we may certainly rely. For τὸ πνεῦμα, *that Spirit* which I speak of *is truth;* an infallible witness, which cannot deceive you, that *Jesus is the Son of God.* And so it is likewise, that *eternal life is in him,* and that we shall enjoy it by his means; for this record of God is given to make us as sure of the one as we are of the other.

Let us briefly therefore consider, first, what his miracles say to this; and then, secondly, what force there is in his resurrection and exaltation to prove it.

I.

And at our entrance upon the first of these, let us, before we go any further, weigh those words of this apostle St. John in his Gospel, where he tells us that he wrote the *signs which Jesus did* (suppose after his resurrection) *in the presence of his disciples,* for this very purpose, *that they might believe that he was the Christ, the Son of God; and that believing they*

[c] 1 John v. 6. [d] [See Part 1. chap. 7. vol. ii. p. 530.]

might have life through his name[d]. They were wrought by him, and recorded by his disciples, for these two ends; that the world might be convinced he was the great Lord of all, and that they might, by faithful subjection to him, look for eternal life from his omnipotent love. It was the design of all his wonderful works throughout his whole life (to which the apostle may have respect as well as to those after his resurrection) to persuade men to believe that he would make his followers so happy. For by these *he manifested forth his glory*, (as I observed before of the *beginning of his miracles* in Cana of Galilee[e],) and declared to the world he could work as great a change upon our mortal bodies as he did then upon the water; making them as much nobler than they are now, as the water excelled itself when it was become wine. They were mighty instances of his power, and of his goodness too: they made him appear to be the *King of Israel*, who was to *deliver* and bring *salvation* to them; though much greater than they expected.

That our Lord did work miracles, is a truth which they that crucified him can no more deny than that he died. The wisest of them could never find any colour to affirm that the gospel-story was but a fabulous legend, which related wonders that were never done. For if they had been able to say this, Maimonides, the very best of them, would not have been put to such distress as to let fall these words, which we read in his treatise of Kings[f]? "Do not imagine that the king Messiah shall have any need to work wonders, or alter the course of nature, or restore the dead to life again, with such like things, that fools talk of." Had he not known as well that these things could not be denied which are related of Jesus, as he did that their force to prove any thing being granted, they would be an unanswerable testimony to him, he would never have thus slighted (as he doth in many other books) things of this nature; which brought the greatest reputation to Moses among their ancestors, and were the cause why they believed on him, though he attempted no such wonder as the raising dead men to life again. Our Saviour, he was not ignorant, very often appealed

[d] John xx. 30, 31. [e] ii. 11. [f] Chap. xi. [al. cap. xii. apud Alting. in Schilo, lib. iv. cap. 16. tom. v. p. 93.]

to his *works*, as the testimony of God to him; and thought it sufficient to tell John's disciples, when they came to inquire who he was, that *he opened blind men's eyes, cleansed lepers, and raised up the dead;* by which they might answer their own question. And therefore something was to be said by this Jew to disparage these, upon which he saw the credit of our Saviour in great part relied. Now had it not been the readiest way to deny that there were such miracles wrought? Nothing but the notoriousness of the facts made him wave that course; which drove him upon this wretched shift, of denying utterly that miracles are credible witnesses to him that works them. By this means he thought to rob our Saviour of the glory they brought him; and was so blind as not to see that at the same time he took away from his own Master the greatest support he had of his authority. And therefore herein he is deserted by his own countrymen, particularly by Abarbinel; who, as I observed before, makes the power of working miracles one of the principal gifts of the Messiah. In which our Lord, it is apparent to his very enemies, was so eminent, that one cannot imagine why he did not believe on him; unless, with the spiteful Pharisees, he imputed all his works to the devil. Which blasphemy, I have shown in the former book [f], is so manifestly confuted by his holy doctrine and life, that they must be no less foolish than malicious who regard it. We ask no more, but to allow such things were done as the gospel reports: (which they dare not deny us:) and then their great uncertainty what to say against them, shows how forcible they are to convince all indifferent men that he came from God; whose finger they were, pointing them to him as the person whom they should hear and obey.

And that they were a plain demonstration of his power to give *eternal life* to all his followers, will appear from these following considerations.

I. If they confirmed all his doctrine to be the will of God, then we ought to look upon this as firmly established by them; for it was a known part of his doctrine, that God sent him to proclaim his purpose of *giving everlasting life by him to all those who should believe on him* [g]. There is nothing in this

[f] [See Part 1. chap. 6. vol. ii. p. 509.] [g] John vi. 38, 39, 40; iii. 16.

assertion needs proof, but that they confirmed his doctrine; (this being, it is apparent to all, a constant part of it;) in which the blind man thought he could presently satisfy any reasonable person, when he said, *If this man were not of God, he could do nothing*[h]: that is, no such miracle as that was, of opening the eyes of one born blind; a thing the world had never heard of, since it was first created, till that time. He preached nothing but piety and holiness; he lived as he preached: both his sermons and his conversation were above all that ever had been for sanctity; and his works being so also, much beyond the most famed prodigies the world had ever boasted of, it was an unanswerable argument that God was in him; who was never known to have let such things be done before in the compass of so many ages; and therefore would not let them now do their first service to the countenancing of a lie. And therefore to these our Lord often refers them, as there was reason, for a proof of his divine authority. For if a false prophet could do such wonders, how should there be any possibility of ever knowing a true? Read John x. 37, 38; xiv. 10; xv. 24.

That which is most proper for me to note is, that in John xiv, when he bids them look upon his *works*, as the best glass (that then was) wherein to see his divinity, he was discoursing on this very subject, that *he was the life*[i]: and that he was *going to the Father* to live with him, and to *prepare a place for them*[k]. Of this he could not give them a better evidence than the *wonders* he had wrought, until his *resurrection*. After which indeed (he saith[l]) they should *do greater works than these;* which would more plainly tell them that he *was with the Father*. It will not be unprofitable if I open the whole discourse from verse 2, where he tells them, with a solemn profession he would not abuse them, that *in his Father's house were many mansions;* and that he was *going* away indeed from them, but it was in order *to prepare a place for them*. He departed, he would have them believe, not merely to go to rest himself after all his labours; but to take up lodgings, as one may say, for them in that blessed rest prepared for the people of God. Now the consequence of this he tells them in

[h] John ix. 33. [i] Ver. 6. [k] Ver. 2, 3. [l] Ver. 12.

the next words: *and if I go and prepare a place for you, I will come again, and receive you unto myself: that where I am, there ye may be also*[m]. He assures them, that is, he would not lose the pains he had taken to procure such a happiness for them; but see them safe there, where they should have their share with him in that very bliss which he was about to receive. *And where I go ye know, and the way ye know*[n]: as if he should have said, You understand well enough what I mean: (for I have often spoke of these things:) I go to heaven, to live with God. and to give life to those that believe on me; which that you may not miss of, I have shown you both by my doctrine and my example the way that leads to it. Alas! replies one of his apostles, who seems to be the slowest of all other to apprehend his meaning, or give credit to him, *Lord, we know not whither thou goest; and how can we find the way*[o]*?* No? saith our Saviour to him again, that is strange. I myself *am the way*, from whom you might have learnt how to arrive at this happiness. And that this is the true way, which I have described, you need not doubt; for *I am the truth;* that is, the teacher of truth, who have demonstrated several ways, that what I declare is the very mind and will of God. And the same arguments which prove me to be the truth, evidently show also that *I am the life;* who will conduct you to that bliss unto which I am now going. *And no man cometh to the Father*, (and that eternal life which is with him,) *but by me;* that is, by believing my words, and following my steps[p]. And therefore, if you had minded me and my words, (as it follows, *if ye had known me, ye would known my Father* also[q],) you would have known it is my Father's purpose to give you eternal life: and from henceforth sure you will not doubt of it, now that I have revealed it so plainly, that I may say *you know him, and have seen him.* Upon this answer of our Saviour, another of his apostles wished they might but *see the Father*, and that would be *sufficient*[r]. He desired, that is, there might be some such divine appearance to them, as there was to Abraham and others of the patriarchs in old time, and they would trouble him with no further questions about this

[m] John xiv. 3. [n] Ver. 4. [o] Ver. 5. [p] Ver. 6. [q] Ver. 7. [r] Ver. 8.

matter. How? saith our Saviour, *have I been so long with you, and yet hast thou not known me, Philip?* that is, understood what kind of person I am? Dost thou not see that I am the only-begotten of the Father, full of grace and truth, the express image of his person, and the brightness of his glory? Was there ever such an appearance of God in the world as thou seest in me? All the fathers enjoyed was but a little glimpse of the divine glory, in comparison with that which now shines upon you in my face. And therefore why dost thou ask to see the Father, as if there was nothing of him in me? I tell thee, *he that hath seen me hath seen the Father.* And so it follows, *Believest thou not that I am in the Father, and the Father in me? the words that I speak unto you I speak not of myself; but the Father that dwelleth in me, he doeth the works*[s]. The properties of God are known by the works that he doeth; and there are such wonderful evidences of a divine power as well as wisdom in me, that all the visions the prophets had, together with all the miracles they did, were not such a testimony of a divine presence with them, as these are that the Father dwelleth in me. Therefore *believe that I am in the Father, and the Father in me*[t]; (that is, take my word for it, that you see the Father, as you desire, by seeing me;) *or else believe me for the very works' sake.* Let these, at least, convince you that I am as nearly related to him as I pretend; for they are such as can come from none but from God alone. Σύντομος ἀπόδειξις καὶ ῥᾳδία τῆς τοῦ Πατρὸς φύσεως, ὁ Υἱὸς, as St. Greg. Nazianzen speaks[u]: 'The Son is a brief and easy demonstration of the nature of the Father;' who appeared in him, and spake by him, and declared both how good and how powerful he is, not only by all that our Saviour said, but by the works that he did. Which were most manifest tokens that God was in him; and that his words were the words of God; and, consequently, that in him we have life; and that he went to heaven, as he said, to prepare a place for us; and that he will come again, and receive us unto himself, if we walk in that way which he hath chalked out to us by his most holy life.

This our Saviour asserts also in other places, where he alleges his *works* as an evidence of this very doctrine. I shall

[s] John xiv. 10. [t] Ver. 11.

[u] Orat. xxxvi. p. 590. [ed. Ben. orat. xxx. § 20. tom. i. p. 554 A.]

mention only two more, and so dismiss this argument. In John v. 28, 29, he tells the obstinate Jews it was no such marvel that a dead man should be raised up by him, if they considered, which was far more wonderful, that he was the Person who would one day call all mankind out of their graves, and give unto the good *everlasting life*. For proof of which, he puts them in mind presently after of his *miraculous works*[u], which testified God had sent him, and would verify all that he said. And thereupon he exhorts them to *search the Scriptures, for in them you think ye have eternal life; and they are they which testify of me. But you will not come to me, that you may have life*[x]. Which was as much as to say, You all look for *eternal life*, and you hope in the holy Scriptures to find it: I wish you would be more diligent in perusing them; for they show plainly that I am he who must bring you to it. But this is the misery of your condition, that neither my *works*, (spoken of before,) nor the Scriptures, nor the testimony of John Baptist, (which he first alleged, ver. 32, &c.) will persuade you to believe on me; without which I cannot bestow life upon you.

The same he tells them John x. 25, where he saith, *The works that I do in my Father's name, they bear witness of me*. They made it so apparent, that is, he ought with all readiness to have been received, that he could not judge, as you read in the next verse, their infidelity came from any thing but improbity. Now what it was his works witnessed, he tells us ver. 27—30, viz. that to his sheep, who were obedient to him, he would give *eternal life*: of which they should have such a sure possession, that they should never lose it, because none should be able to wrest them from him with whom God himself had intrusted them; who would maintain and defend them, and their right to it, without any possibility of plucking them out of his hands. His Father, he means, had appointed him to bestow this life on all his followers, who was able to make good his own purpose and promises: and therefore, as the works he did made it appear that he and the Father were one; so he would certainly make good the doctrine which he preached, (and thus by miracles confirmed,) that they should *have eternal life, and never perish*.

[u] John v. 36. [x] Ver. 39, 40.

II. This, we may reasonably think, his miracles declared, if we consider the nature and quality of every one of them, which, in general, was the doing of some good or other to mankind. What did this speak but that he was come to be the Author of the greatest happiness to them? They could not well pick less sense out of his works than this, when they saw him bestow such benefits, that he was of *God, who is good, and doeth good*, and would never cease his loving-kindness to the world. For the multitude and the constancy of his miraculous acts of bounty, in so many places, to all sorts of men, throughout his whole life, declared the largeness, the universality, and unchangeable perpetuity of his goodness; which would withhold no good thing from upright persons. And therefore, in his answer to the question which John's disciples proposed, you find his opening the eyes of the blind, cleansing the lepers, making the lame to walk, and such like miraculous works, in conjunction with his *preaching the gospel to the poorest people*[z]; which was nothing else but this glad tidings of *eternal life*. This he published so plainly as none before him had done; and that they might be disposed to believe him to be the person in whom all nations should be blessed, he did such miracles as none before him had done: which were all blessings, the greatest favours and kindnesses to mankind; but no hurt to any one man in the world. This was a greater argument to receive him as the Author of *eternal life*, which he promised, than the wonders in Egypt were to persuade the Israelites that Moses should redeem them, and bring them to temporal felicity: inasmuch as the constant doing innumerable benefits to men renders one far more acceptable than the killing and destroying them.

III. But then, if you more particularly consider, that a great many of his miracles were the restoring men to their primitive state of integrity and soundness of body, by removing the sicknesses and diseases which sin had brought upon them, it was a notable sign that he was the Healer of nature, the Restorer of the world, the Σωτὴρ, *Saviour* of mankind; who could bring them back to that blessed immortality which they had lost. Whence it was that when he cured the man sick of the palsy,

[z] Matt. xi. 5.

instead of saying, Be well, he said, *Son, thy sins are forgiven thee:* to show that he had power to remove the punishment of sin, and so make them immortal.

IV. The like another sort of miracles seems to suggest to us; which was, his feeding so many thousands at a time with a small quantity of provisions. Of which you read, (as in other places, so) in John vi. 5, 6, &c., where you find, that with *five barley loaves and two small fishes* he entertained above five thousand people so plentifully, that every one of them had as much as he desired; and when they had done, there were twelve baskets of fragments, which remained over and above to them that had eaten. This miracle made the multitude conclude, that certainly he was *the Prophet* who should come into the world; and therefore they purposed, whether he would or no, to come and make him *their King*[a]. And when he avoided it by crossing the sea privately[b], they also took shipping to follow after him, and never rested till they had found him[c]. Whereupon our Lord takes occasion to tell them how sorry he was to see them so industriously pursue the food of their bodies, and not mind the food of their souls, to which his late miracle led them; and in plain terms tell them that spiritual food was himself; who was the *bread of life* they should hunger after more than for the loaves wherewith they had been filled; and that if they did eat of him, they should have *everlasting life, and he would raise them up at the last day*[d]. This they might easily have believed, if they had considered the miracle of the loaves; which was a token from God that he could support them eternally. For why should not he be able to give life, who so strangely preserved it? and out of a little dust make a body, as he had out of a few crumbs made so many loaves? If their desires had been fixed upon this *eternal life* which he preached as much as upon the present, they would as naturally have taken this miracle for *the seal* whereby God noted him to be the giver of it, as they took it to be a mark that he could thus fill their bellies every day, and save them the labour of seeking food, after the manner that Moses fed their fathers with manna in the wilderness.

[a] John vi. 14, 15. [b] Ver. 16, 17, &c. [c] Ver. 24, 25. [d] Ver. 26, 27, and 35, &c.

V. And next to this, if you consider how he dispossessed devils, which was a wonder as frequent as any, it told the world plainly that he was come to *destroy the works of the devil*, to overthrow his kingdom, and divest him of his power, unless they would still uphold him in it. By sin he held his throne; this gave him all the power he had over men, and made them his vassals and slaves: who being so often rescued out of his hands, and he so openly foiled, it was a sign that Jesus was come to take away the sins of the world, and thereby disarm him of the power of death, and restore men again to that everlasting life, out of which the devil had before thrown mankind, as our Saviour now threw him out of them. All this, the Jews themselves confess, shall be the work of the Messiah. According to what we read in the author of the book concerning the Service of the Sanctuary, who saith, that "the king Messiah shall restore all things to their first estate, so that the intention of God shall be fulfilled which he had in the creation of the world; for the world shall return to that natural perfection which it had before rebellious Adam sinned. The prophets are faithful witnesses of this, as it is written Is. lxv. 19: *I will rejoice in Jerusalem, and joy in my people; and the voice of weeping shall be no more heard in her, nor the voice of crying.* And so he speaks also in another place of that book[e]: *He will swallow up death in victory, and the Lord God will wipe away tears from all faces.*" The author also of *Baal Hatturim*, as I find him cited by Hackspan[f], confesses as much in his notes upon Numb. xix, where he saith, "in the times of salvation (or the days of Christ) there shall be no use of the ashes of the red heifer, according to that, *He will swallow up death in victory.*" Which words are cited by St. Paul[g], (as the other part of that verse is by the voice St. John heard from heaven[h],) when he is treating of the resurrection of the dead as the great comfort of Christian people: who may well expect it, and all the blessings that attend upon it, from our Lord Jesus, the true Messiah, if to all that hath been said we add the consideration of what follows.

[e] Isa. xxv. 8.

[f] Cabala Judaica, sect. 72. [tom. ii. p. 313. apud Crenii Thes. libb. Philol. et Histor. 8vo. Lugd. Bat. 1700, 1.]

[g] 1 Cor. xv. 54.

[h] Rev. xxi. 4.

VI. That he raised even dead men to life again: which was the greatest miracle of all, and at that time the greatest witness of the *Spirit* to him. This showed that indeed he had life in himself, and would bestow it upon us, as I have already noted; for he raised them on purpose to declare what he was, and what they might expect from him, viz. a perfect victory over death and the grave: which appeared most remarkably in the resurrection of Lazarus, who was the most famous instance of this power residing in him: for the miracle wrought on him was not so little as the recovering one who drew his last breath (which was the case of the centurion's servant); nor the restoring one to life who was newly dead (as in the case of the ruler of the synagogue's daughter); nor the raising a young man who was carried out towards his grave (as the widow's son was): but *πρὸς τὸ ὑψηλότερον ἡ θαυματοποιία προέρχεται*, as Greg. Nyssen speaks[i], his 'wonder-working proceeds to something more sublime.' A man of grown years, not only dead, but musty, already putrid, and in a dissolution (as he describes his condition), so far gone toward corruption, that his own friends thought it not fit our Lord should go to uncover his tomb, because of the ill smell which might be expected; this man, I say, with one word of our Lord's, was restored again to life, firm and compacted: and though he was bound hand and foot with grave-clothes, it did not hinder his coming out of his grave; which, as Theophanes thinks, was a miracle little less than his resurrection. Who can choose but look on this *οἱονεὶ τὰ προτέλεια τῆς καθολικῆς ἀναστάσεως*, to use the same St. Gregory's words, as the 'beginning (the little mysteries, as I may call them) of the universal resurrection,' into which Christ now initiated his disciples? For it is apparent by this, he is the Lord of life, who can raise a putrid rotten carcase, as well as those who are but newly departed the world.

And this was no private business transacted only between him and his disciples, but a thing so notorious, that the *ὄχλος, the multitude* who were there present, *bare record of it*[j]: that is, they affirmed it to be no vain report, but told those of Jerusalem (whither our Saviour was then going), who had not

[i] De Hominis opificio, cap. xxv. [tom. i. p. 112 D.] [j] John xii. 17.

seen the miracle done, that it was a certain truth upon their knowledge: which they might affirm with the greater assurance, because, as Theophanes[k] observes, they were confirmed in this belief by the testimony of all their senses. "By their own voice, which showed him the tomb, saying, *Come and see;* and his loud voice which they heard, saying, *Lazarus, come forth*[l]: by their sight, when they beheld him, whom they knew very well to be dead, obeying his word: by their smell, when they perceived the ill scent, as they rolled away the stone: by their touch, when they loosed his hands and his feet, as our Lord bade them, and let him go." By all these they were so well satisfied, that there was no room left for their infidelity; nor much for the Pharisees', who knew neither how to confute this testimony, nor how to avoid the consequence of it. They began now to despair of prevailing against him any other way than by taking away his life; which their malice made them design against the clearest light: though that also proved, as you shall see presently, but a further confirmation of the truth they sought to obscure, by his rising again from the dead. And they could have found in their hearts to have killed Lazarus too, because, as long as he lived, he would proclaim this miracle to the honour of Jesus; who hereby gave such an illustrious testimony that he was the Author of eternal life, that just when he was going to raise up Lazarus, he inculcates this doctrine, as the fittest season to impress it upon them; *I am the resurrection and the life: he that believeth in me, though he were dead, yet shall he live. And whosoever liveth, and believeth in me, shall never die*[m]. Martha, it seems, believed this before, upon a persuasion that he was *the Christ, the Son of God, that should come into the world*[n]. But when she saw Lazarus come out of his grave, then sure she believed it more strongly, both because it was a further argument that he was the Christ, and likewise included in it that very thing which he propounded to her belief, viz. that *he was the life,* and would *give life* unto those who were dead, if they believed on him.

I shall conclude this part of the *Spirit's* testimony with

[k] Archiepisc. Taurom. Hom. xxv. [p. 182 C.] [l] John xi. 34, 43.
[m] Ver. 25, 26. [n] Ver. 27.

those words of our Lord himself, John viii. 50, where he protests that he *sought not his own glory:* that is, assumed not to himself this great power to be *the life of the world;* but God the Father sought it, i. e. persuaded the world of it by the illustrious miracles which he wrought; whereby *the Father honoured him,* (as he says[o],) and passed such a judgment on him, that we may all conclude, as he doth, *Verily, verily, if a man keep his words, he shall not see death*[p].

II.

Of which we shall be the more confident, if we add now the other witness of the *Spirit* to him, which was in raising him from the dead, and giving him glory at God's right hand. This was a greater wonder than all that preceded, sufficient to satisfy those who still remained doubtful. For "if anybody (as St. Greg. Nyssen discourses in the book before mentioned[q]) should use those words of our Lord in another case, and apply them to this business, saying, *Physician, cure thyself,* it is but meet that he who did such wonders on other men's bodies, to prove a resurrection, should give an example of it in his own. We have seen one nigh to death, another newly dead, a young man ready to be laid in his grave, and Lazarus already rotten; all these by his word recalled to life: let us see one live again who was wounded, and had his heart pierced, and his blood shed, one who we are sure was dead. Come, then, and look upon Jesus himself, whose hands and feet were pierced, into whose side a spear was thrust. Come, and look upon him who bled to death." And if this man was raised from the dead (nay, more than that, ascended into heaven), as abundance of credible witnesses testify; what doubt is there left that by him God will give us a blessed resurrection unto immortal life, if we be obedient to him? They that saw the one (viz. his resurrection and ascension) could not but steadfastly believe the other, and have told us that he was raised and glorified on purpose that *our faith and hope might be in God*[r]. This was the great design and end of first opening his grave, and then opening the heavens to him; that our confidence in God might revive again, and we might hope by his favour to have the

[o] John viii. 54. [p] Ver. 51. [q] [p. 114.] [r] 1 Pet. i. 21.

honour of being made the *sons of God*, by *being the children of the resurrection*[s].

That our blessed Saviour was really dead, as the history testifies, his greatest enemies always confessed, and still acknowledge. He hung a long time upon the cross; there he bled; and at last his side was wounded with a spear in the vital parts. All the spectators were satisfied that he had given up the ghost; and the soldiers, when they came to break his legs, as the manner was, found the work already so effectually done that there was no need of it. He was wrapped in cerecloths, laid in a grave, and given up by all his friends for a lost man. But that after all this he was as really alive again as he had been before, is testified by divers sufficient witnesses; and among the rest, by one of his principal enemies, who was thoroughly convinced of it. The apostles saw him very often; they spake with him; they felt and handled him; one of them put his finger into the very print of the nails, and thrust his hand into his wounded side. They ate and drank with him; they received commissions from him; and after he had shown himself alive to them by many infallible proofs, being seen of them forty days, he ascended up to heaven in their sight; and from thence, according to his promise, they received the Holy Ghost, i. e. in his name did all sorts of miracles, raising even dead men to life again. And after all he appeared from heaven to St. Paul, (a man that set himself vehemently against him, and breathed nothing but threatenings and slaughters against his disciples,) whom he turned quite to be on his side, persuading him so fully that he was indeed risen from the dead that he became, as you have heard, a most zealous preacher of it with the continual hazard of his life. This is a more credible history than any other, (as it were easy to show, if it were my present business;) and we may better doubt of all records than of those wherein the memory of these things is preserved. They were holy, devout, and self-denying persons, who report these things upon their own knowledge. And they are reported not by one or two, but by many of them; who met with nothing in the world to tempt them to tell a lie, but with a great many things to deter them from publishing so odious a truth. And therefore, if we will not doubt of every thing we

[s] [Luke xx. 36.]

do not see, we cannot refuse to believe that Jesus did indeed rise again after he was dead and buried, and ascended into heaven. Which being supposed, (for I shall say no more of it here,) there is no man can have the face to deny "the resurrection of the body" and "life everlasting," which Christ our Lord hath promised us. There can be no truer reasoning than that of St. Paul; *If we believe that Jesus died and rose again, even so them also that sleep in Jesus will God bring with him*[r].

I. For thus much is evident at first sight, and is included in the thing itself, that this work of the *Spirit* proves a possibility of the resurrection of the dead, and shows that we mortal creatures, who live on the earth, may live in the heavens. So the same apostle argues elsewhere against those who denied this truth: *If Christ be preached* (upon such credible testimonies as he mentions in the foregoing verses) *that he rose from the dead, how say some among you that there is no resurrection of the dead*[s]? It is the grossest absurdity, that is, to say there can be no such thing as the restoring of a dead body to life; when it is so evidently verified in Christ's resurrection: which shows it is so far from being impossible or incredible, that it is a thing which hath been done already; as is very well attested by witnesses that cannot with any equity be rejected. And by the same reason he proves we ought not to despair of seeing our bodies made glorious and incorruptible. For if he be not in his grave, (as none could show him there after the third day,) but is made glorious; why may not we partake of the same favour, by that power which raised Christ from the dead, and set him at God's right hand? There is no reason to doubt of it; but the greatest reason to hope and be confident, that *he who raised up the Lord Jesus* (as St. Paul speaks in the next epistle[t]) *will raise up us also by Jesus, and set us in his presence* in the heavens.

II. For by his resurrection the *Spirit* proved the truth of all that the other witnesses, *the Water, the Blood*, and his miraculous *works* too, testified. Particularly it demonstrated the truth of his *doctrine*, by which, as you have seen, *life and immortality was brought to light*. If this had not been true, that we shall live for ever by him, Jesus would have perished,

[r] 1 Thess. iv. 14. [s] 1 Cor. xv. 12. [t] 2 Cor. iv. 14.

and never have come to life again to deceive the world the second time. But seeing God did not leave his soul in hell, nor suffer his *Holy* (i. e. his anointed) *One* to see corruption; it is an uncontrollable argument that those who believe on him shall not perish neither, but be made alive as he is. Because he that said he would rise again the *third* day, said likewise with the same assurance, that at the *last* day he will raise up us also, and bestow upon us everlasting life. When God (who alone could do it) verified the one, and according to his word raised up Jesus the third day; he bid us be assured of the other, that this Jesus hath life in himself, and will by his power raise up us, according to his promise, unto a never-dying life.

This is the character he had given of himself, *I am the resurrection and the life;* that is, the author, the cause of both: *he that believeth on me shall have everlasting life, and I will raise him up at the last day;* nothing of him shall perish, neither his soul nor his body; for even *they that are in their graves shall hear his voice,* and shall rise again to life. This he often preached, and proved many ways: but after all he sealed it with his blood, and bade them expect a little, and they should see it sealed by his resurrection from the dead. Which ensuing at the time appointed, was a perfect demonstration that he said true, when he affirmed that he is the *resurrection and the life;* by whom we shall receive this inestimable benefit of rising again after death, to live for ever with him. Of this as well as the former consideration I may possibly say so much elsewhere, that I shall spare any further pains about them now.

III. Let us rather remember how several persons rose from the dead at that very time when he left his grave[u]: which were notable instances of his power to give life; and put us in hope that we shall all rise again as they did. There is no cause but his resurrection to be assigned of this miracle, which fell out the same time that he was missing in his grave, as the opening of their tombs, at that very moment when he died. Never was any such thing heard of before or since; and therefore it was intended to demonstrate the mighty power of his resurrection: when *many bodies of saints which slept arose, and came out of their graves, and went into Jerusalem, and*

[u] Matt. xxvii. 52, 53.

appeared unto many. Whose testimony none have had the confidence to contradict by endeavouring to disprove it; but the Jews rather by some concessions of theirs confirm us in the belief of it. For it is a common opinion now among their doctors, that "the kingdom of the Messiah shall begin with the resurrection of the dead." "Bury me," said R. Jeremiah, "with shoes on my feet, and my staff in my hand, and lay me on one side, that when Christ comes, I may be ready." But of this conceit we can find no footsteps in the old Scriptures; which makes it probable that they have borrowed this. as they have done many other things, from the holy Gospel, in which it is recorded, that he began his entrance upon his kingdom with the resurrection of some pious persons, as an earnest of the restoring all the rest to eternal life. And thus it is likely they have learnt to discourse of the bodies of the just after they are raised; concerning which some of them speak so sublimely, above the dull and gross conceptions of the rest of their nation, that one can scarce look upon it otherwise than as Christian language. "When the soul is in the state of glory," (saith the book Zohar [x],) "it sustains itself with the light above, wherewith it is also clothed: and when it shall return to the body, it shall come with the same light, and with the body shall shine as with the brightness of heaven." More there is in other authors to the same purpose, which say, God can give us bodies strong and vigorous *like the angels;* and that the bodies of the just after the resurrection shall be subtle, "like the globe of the moon [y]," and so give no impediment to the soul, in its enjoyment of the splendour of the Divine Majesty.

But supposing this to be their own language, without any tincture they had received from the Christian doctrine, it will be still more remarkable, that our Lord Jesus (according to their expectations from the Messiah) should begin to raise the dead, when he went to take possession of his throne. A plain sign that he is the resurrection and the life; from whom we may confidently look for bodies, not only bright as the *moon,* but that shall shine, according to his faithful promise, *like the sun* in the kingdom of the Father. Concerning which things

[x] Vid. Jo. de Voysin in Pug. fid. part. iii. dist. 2. c. 8. [p. 618.]
[y] Vid. eum de Lege Div. in Matt. xxii. 30. [cap. 44. p. 613.]

if the apostles had written false, and there had not been *many* able to *bear record* of the rising of these *holy persons*, and coming into Jerusalem, as well as of the rising of Lazarus; there would have been pens enough in those days employed to confute them, and proclaim the forgery. And these Jews would have been as careful preservers of such confutations as of any their most beloved traditions; which can never do them so much service as those volumes would have done.

IV. Nor is there the least shadow of reason to question the testimony of those who saw him *ascend into heaven*, and, as a token of his being enthroned there, received from him, ten days after, the gift of the Holy Ghost. Which completed the demonstration of his power and purpose to give *eternal life* to all his followers. For,

1. His very ascension into heaven (as it breeds in us a belief of a glorious state in the other world, so it) evidently shows that it is possible such as we may be translated thither. And though our bodies now be but lumps of living clay, yet they may one day be snatched, as he was, from this dull globe, to shine among the stars. And the angels also appearing both at his resurrection and ascension, and waiting upon him unto heaven, show that its gates are no longer barred against us, but set open again to give us a free admission into it. For they who were set to watch the way to paradise, and guard it so that none should enter, voluntarily lent their assistance to transport him thither, after they had brought the joyful news of his being risen from the dead.

2. But this is the least comfort we receive from thence; for his glorification at God's right hand, when he came thither, advances our hope to a greater height; and shows that it is not only possible, but certain, we shall be taken up above to be with him. His kingdom, it is apparent now, (by his sending the Holy Ghost,) is supereminent over all; and nothing can be out of the reach of his power. For it is a power over all creatures *in heaven and earth, and under the earth*[z], who do obeisance to him, and cannot resist him. And a power to do all things: for *God hath put all things under his feet*[a]. A power of conferring all dignities and honours[b]; and of removing all impediments to our preferment, he having the *keys*

[z] Phil. ii. 10; 1 Pet. iii. ult. [a] 1 Cor. xv. 27. [b] Phil. iii. 21.

of hell and death[c]. In short, a perfect power to do all things to make us glorious, *for in that he put all in subjection under him, he left nothing that is not put under him*[d], as the apostle argues. And though he hath not yet exercised his whole unlimited power, as it there follows, yet we are sure he hath it; because *we see* (by manifest arguments) *Jesus crowned with glory and honour for the suffering of death.* By which the all-wise God thought fit to *consecrate this Captain of our salvation;* who he designed should *bring many sons unto glory* together with himself.

3. Which he will not fail to do, we may be sure, being thus perfected and completely furnished for the very purpose: because this royal power wherewith he is invested is a kind of trust; and he hath received it (as St. Paul plainly supposes[e], where he speaks of his kingdom) not only for himself, but for the good of all those whom he rules and governs. For the apostle concludes that he, having a kingdom which must at last be resigned into the hands of God the Father, will first put down all rule, all authority and power, and leave no enemy unconquered; no, not death, which will only be the last that shall be subdued, but subdued and destroyed it must be[f]. Nay, our Lord himself acknowledges his kingdom to be a trust, when he says, *Thou hast given him power over all flesh, that he should give eternal life to as many as thou hast given him*[g]. Whence it is that he often protests, *it is his Father's will, that of all he hath given him he should lose nothing, but should raise it up again at the last day*[h]. *For as the living Father hath sent me, and I live by the Father, so he that eateth me, even he shall live by me*[i]. And in express terms he saith, as I have shown before, that he went away *to prepare a place for us.* And therefore is bound by his office, we may conclude, to promote us to that glory and honour in the heavens, which it is his Father's will, he knows, should be bestowed on us.

4. And who can doubt at all of his fidelity in this, who was so faithful in all other things; most punctually, for instance, making good his promise of sending the Holy Ghost, as an earnest, I have often said, of this immortal inheritance? None

[c] Rev. i. 18. [d] Heb. ii. 8. [e] 1 Cor. xv. 24, 25. [f] Ver. 26, 27. [g] John xvii. 2. [h] vi. 39, 40. [i] Ver. 57.

can imagine he will now prove negligent in that, which by his place he stands engaged to perform, when upon earth he did the will of him that sent him with such exactness, that he rewarded him for it with that high dignity which he now enjoys in the heavens. Therefore his greatest care was to assert and prove his power to give eternal life. Of his will he thought there needed not much be said; for none could doubt of it, after they saw him die for them, and then express such love, after his resurrection, as to send the Holy Ghost upon them.

5. This is abundantly sufficient to secure all considering persons of so desirable a good. Which the apostles began confidently to expect as soon as ever they were satisfied of the resurrection of our Lord from the dead. Before he ascended to heaven their thoughts ran thither, and they began to see that he was the Lord of life and glory. For as soon as St. Thomas was convinced by a palpable demonstration that he was risen, he cried out, *My Lord, and my God*[k]. This was the first time that any of his apostles gave him the title of their God; when they were fully satisfied, as Grotius observes, by his resurrection, that he would give eternal life to them. And then it was also, you may note, that he first gave them the title of his *brethren*, who should share with him in the glory to which he was going; *Go tell my brethren that they go into Galilee*, &c.[l] In which words he alludes, as Eusebius observes, to those words, *I will declare thy name unto my brethren*[m]. He never called them so before, till he was after a new manner *declared the Son of God with power by the resurrection from the dead*[n]: and now to own them for his *brethren*, was as much as to say, that they should be made the *sons of God* by their resurrection, and be *coheirs* with him. To prove which new brotherhood the apostle to the Hebrews brings that place of the psalmist now mentioned, *He is not ashamed to call them brethren, saying, I will declare thy name unto my brethren*[o]. Whence he is called the *firstborn among many brethren*[p]. Whom he bids them that first saw him alive again inform, that he ascended *to his God and to their God, and to his Father*

[k] John xx. 28. [l] Matt. xxviii. 10; John xx. 17. [m] Psalm xxii. 22. [n] [Rom. i. 4.] [o] Heb. ii. 11, 12. [p] Rom. viii. 29.

and their Father; to show them that they might safely repose such a confidence in God as he had done, and hope to be raised by him from the dead as he was, and receive a portion with him in the heavenly inheritance.

6. This relation which he owns to us gives us the greatest confidence to look upon him as *our hope,* (as St. Paul speaks[p],) *the hope of glory*[q]. For it is certain that when any person is advanced to a throne, his blood is thereby enriched: all his family, I mean, are raised and dignified; his children especially put into the quality of royal persons, though never so mean before: nay, made capable of succeeding him in his state and greatness. Now our Lord hath a family as well as other persons: all those who believe on him being acknowledged by him, not only to be his *brethren,* but his *children:* who, living by his faith, are really descended from him; and therefore *by his resurrection are also begotten again unto a lively hope of an incorruptible inheritance*[r]. Whence the same divine writer, who observes how he calls them brethren, immediately shows how he owns a nearer relation to them, saying, *Behold I and the children which God hath given me*[s]: who in him are all advanced to the highest honour. His glory makes them illustrious: for *if children,* saith St. Paul, *then heirs; heirs of God, and joint-heirs with Christ*[t].

Who is not to be considered merely as a single person, but as the Lord and Head of a body or corporation of men; who are so one with him, that the raising him to so great a glory as he inherits is the raising and ennobling them. A sure pledge, that is, that the same shall be done for the members which was for the head; who will not be without them, but make them partakers of the same benefit which is bestowed on him. He is like the *first-fruits,* as St. Paul discourses, (in his chapter of the resurrection[u],) a *second Adam,* the Head and beginning of a new creation; by whom all shall as surely be made alive, as in the *first Adam* all died.

7. Why should we doubt of it, since he was carried to heaven, as they that received the Holy Ghost testified, *to appear before God with his blood for us*[x]. This is a very

[p] 1 Tim. i. 1. [q] Col. i. 27. [r] 1 Pet. i. 3, 4. [s] Heb. ii. 13.
[t] Rom. viii. 17. [u] 1 Cor. xv. 20, &c. [x] Heb. ix. 23, 24.

great argument that we have *eternal life*, and that it is *in him*; for this *sacrifice of himself* being accepted by God, (the *eternal Spirit*, which *offered him to God*, presenting him *before him without spot or blemish*,) must needs take away sin, and remove all hindrances to our admission into the very same place where he is, as that Epistle proves at large. *By this offering he hath perfected for ever them that are sanctified; and we have παρρησίαν, liberty and freedom* (without any let or impediment) *to enter into the holiest by the blood of Jesus*[y]. Who is such an high-priest over the family of God as is *set on the right hand of the throne of the Majesty in the heavens*[z]; *and being consecrated for evermore, is become the author of eternal salvation unto all them that obey him*[a].

8. To whom therefore we ought to draw near with a true heart, in full assurance of faith, that he will not fail to employ his power to make us happy with himself. Which, you may consider once more, he most earnestly prayed for when he was on earth: it being one of his last requests to his Father, that *those whom he had given him might be with him where he is; that they might behold the glory which he hath given him*[b]. And therefore having obtained such a power over all as hath been described, by his precious blood which he was then going to offer, we may rest assured he will not let us be without that of which he was so desirous before he left the world, now that he is in heaven with full power to fulfil his own desires. For it is unreasonable to suppose that a friend, who earnestly beseeches another to grant us a favour, will not most readily do it himself, when he becomes as able to bestow it as he of whom before he asked it.

But the fear of swelling this treatise into over-great a bulk makes me pass over these things with the bare mention of them, and omit many other. I shall put an end therefore to this last testimony of the Spirit with those remarkable words of St. Peter, in his second Epistle, ver. 3, 4 of the first chapter, where he saith, as we translate him, that *the divine power hath given unto us all things that pertain unto life and godliness, through the knowledge of him that hath called us to glory and virtue: whereby are given unto us exceeding great*

[y] Heb. x. 14, 19. [z] viii. 1. [a] v. 9; vii. 28. [b] John xvii. 24.

and precious promises, &c. The meaning of which, in a larger form of words, is plainly this: "Account that *grace and peace* which I have wished you in abundance (ver. 2,) from God and our Saviour, no small blessing: for God hath in a most excellent omnipotent manner bestowed on us all things that are necessary for our future happiness and felicity, and for our present conduct in piety, which is the only way to that eternal life. And if you ask me how he hath given us these things in so resplendent godlike a manner, I'll tell you: it is *through the knowledge of him that hath called us;* that is, through Jesus Christ, the true Word of God, who hath called us to piety and happiness. And if you inquire again, how you shall know that what he saith is true, and that he calls us not merely from himself, but from God, who directs us by him in the right way of godliness, which will bring us to everlasting life, I'll resolve you in that also: for he hath called us διὰ δόξης καὶ ἀρετῆς, *by* (so it is in the margin) *glory and virtue*." How we come to render it *to glory and virtue* I know not, for it makes the sense obscure; whereas otherwise it is perspicuous and clear; and as if the apostle had said, "The glory and virtue which accompanied his preaching, or presently followed it, is a very strong argument to induce you to believe that he taught the way of God in truth; having revealed all things pertaining to life and godliness, as God himself attests." For by *the glory wherewith he called us*, i. e. preached the gospel and persuaded us to believe, we are to understand his transfiguration on the holy mount, where *they saw his glory*[c]; and to which the apostle afterward appeals, ver. 16, 17 of this chapter, as a justification of the truth of their ministry. The coming down also of the Holy Ghost at his baptism, the voices from heaven, (in one of which God said he would glorify him again as he had done already,) and the descent of the Holy Ghost upon the apostles, are here also to be understood by *glory:* for by these we are called and moved to receive the knowledge of him. And then by *virtue* is undoubtedly meant that very thing which I last treated of, his mighty power in miraculous works, and the mighty power of the Spirit in raising him from the dead. For it is well observed by Drusius and others, that

[c] Luke ix. 32.

ἀρετὴ, 'virtue,' in these holy writings never signifies, as it doth in heathen authors, piety and moral goodness in opposition to vice, but power and might in opposition to weakness. And therefore by this word the Greek interpreters of the Old Testament render the Hebrew word הוֹד, which denotes the greatness, majesty, and height of God's excellency; and sometimes the word עֹז, which signifies 'strength and stoutness.' According to which in the New Testament it denotes either the mighty power of God, (as here in this place,) or else our courage and valour, as in the fifth verse of this chapter. But it is nowhere found in the sacred style used for piety: and therefore we must not render the particle διὰ, *to*, but *by*, *virtue*, that is, 'the power and mightiness of God's arm or strength,' (as the Scripture speaks,) by which our Saviour convinced the world that God the Father had sent him to give life unto it.

Thus the apostle St. Paul saith, (which will very much explain this,) that he *was raised up from the dead* διὰ τῆς δόξης τοῦ Πατρὸς, *by the glory of the Father*[d]. That is, by his glorious power, as Camero well renders it: for his power appeared most gloriously in that wonderful work, whereby, as St. Peter here speaks, he called us to believe on him. So we are to understand him, it appears, by another argument. For if we should say we are called *to glory*, (understanding thereby heaven,) we could not be said to have *precious promises* (as it follows) *hereby given to us:* for this would be to say, that by calling us to heaven he hath called us to heaven. But if we take these words the other way, then the sense runs currently, and delivers to us this excellent truth: that by such means as I have treated of, (the descent of the Holy Ghost, the transfiguration of our Saviour, the voices from heaven, the miracles he wrought, the might of his power which wrought in him when God raised him from the dead,) he persuaded men to receive him as the only-begotten of the Father; who was come, by his authority, to show them the true way to everlasting life. By these we know that we are not cheated, but that he who hath called us is the Son of God; by whom we are sure to attain everlasting life, if we follow those directions he hath given us, which will infallibly bring us to it.

[d] Rom. vi. 4.

And then the next words[e] are still more pertinent to my purpose, δι' ὧν, *whereby* or *by which* (*glory* and *virtue*) *are given unto us exceeding great and precious promises.* We are so sure to attain eternal life, that we have many promises of it; which are so strongly confirmed that we cannot doubt of them, being delivered in such a divine manner. For when he gave them it was διὰ δόξης καὶ ἀρετῆς, *by glory and virtue,* with such demonstrations of his authority to promise them, and of his power to make them good, that we cannot but depend upon his word. None, I suppose, question but by these *great,* these *precious,* yea, *exceeding great and precious promises,* he means those of raising us from the dead, and carrying us to heaven to live with God, and that eternally. These are the chiefest things of which our Lord hath given us such assurance when he called us to believe on his name: things which as much exceed all that was promised Israel as the heavens are wider than the smallest spot of this earth. More precious are they than all lands, if they flowed with milk and honey: *more to be desired than gold, yea, than much fine gold,* than all the gold of Ophir: more to be valued than the crowns of kings, which are not so much as an emmet's egg in comparison with this happiness. Now as there is nothing that can be compared with these promises, so we have no testimony on earth comparable to this of the *Spirit,* that exceeding greatness of his power, whereby these promises were brought to us, and assured to be infallible. For by this we know that he hath all power in heaven and earth, and is able to do whatsoever the Father Almighty doeth; that is, give life to the dead, which is the property of the Almighty alone. So the enemies of our religion are forced to confess, who say there are three keys which God keeps to himself, and commits to none of his ambassadors, the keys of the womb, the keys of heaven, and the keys of the grave[f]. "Thy power," saith Joseph Albos, speaking of God, "is not the power of flesh and blood: for the power of flesh and blood is to put those to death who are alive, but thy power is to raise those to life who are dead." The very same we may justly say of our Lord Jesus Christ,

[e] [2 Pet. i. 4.]

[f] [See the Gemara Sanhedrin, c. 11. § 76. apud J. Cocc. tom. ix. p. 263; and Pococke, Not. Miscell. cap. 6. tom. i. p. 181.]

[g] [Ikkarim, lib. iv. cap. 35, quoted by Pococke, ibid.]

who challenges this power to himself, as I have noted before out of the first of the Revelation, where he tells St. John, *I have the keys of hell and of death*[h]. He was no ordinary ambassador, but can do more than any whom God sent into the world ever did or could. He can raise even the dead bodies of his subjects to life again: and when he hath *lifted them out of the dust*, (if I may apply the Psalmist's words to this purpose,) can *set them with princes;* even with the princes of his heavenly court, to praise and bless his love among those great ministers, the angelical powers, for ever and ever. Which is a power he doth not assume to himself vainly, but was conferred on him by God the Father; who *raised him from the dead, and gave him glory:* wherein St. John beheld him when he said, *I am he that liveth, and was dead; and behold, I live for evermore, Amen; and have the keys of hell and of death.*

Great is thy majesty, O thou most mighty Jesus! whose power is not the power of flesh and blood, but the power of God, who raises those to life who are dead. Great was the joy which filled thy disciples' hearts when they first saw thee alive from the dead, and called thee *their God.* "None can understand the beauty of that sight. O the brightness of that appearing! What a light diffused itself then through the whole creation! What a fragrant smell did the very earthquake breathe forth, when like a public crier it proclaimed the resurrection! What was the savour of the ointment which was then poured out! How was the whole world then transformed and made new! The angels themselves leaped for joy to see it. How sweet was the sound then of their doxologies! With what divine splendours were they then adorned! How beautiful did those preachers of thy resurrection appear! and how great was the glory and the happiness which they came then to proclaim! O those words of theirs, which brought us the news of victory over the enemy! which proclaimed the destruction of death, and published thee to the world, *the resurrection and the life!*

"O that sweet and above all things desirable voice of thine, which, by the women that were carrying spices to thy grave, sounded joy to the world! The heavens then opened their

[h] Rev. i. 18.

gates, and received the glad tidings which were brought to us, as if they had been their own. The intellectual powers rejoiced and took a pleasure in our happiness. The spiritual as well as sensible world was enlightened. The clouds of sadness were dispelled from one end of the world to the other; and the rays of joy possessed all. Guilty nature put off the robes of heaviness, and was clothed with garments of light. The handwriting of the curse was torn in pieces, and promises of blessing were sealed in the room thereof. By that new salutation, when thou saidst *All hail*, the world was filled with the sweetest and everlasting joy.

"For thou art the preacher, and the cause, and the very exultation of all joy; the author of good things; the giver of pleasure; the joy which can never be taken away; the sweet light; the spectacle above all others desirable; the intellectual tranquillity and peace; wisdom itself and power; incorruption and eternity; security and delight; the only unchangeable and inconceivable beauty; sanctity itself, and honour, and righteousness, and glory above measure glorious. O how many names would my mind bring forth to express thine unutterable excellency! It is only my weakness that hinders, and want of words. But thou who art the infinite, not to be named good, far above all the titles that mind can invent; who regardest not words, but rather an inflamed heart; who thyself broughtest the joyful news of thy resurrection, shine now into our minds by the bright beams of thy appearing. Let us see intellectually the superexcellent beauty of the intellectual sun. Let us inwardly enjoy the incomparable sight of our Lord and Master. Let us hear his divine voice speaking some sweet and joyful word to us. O thou gracious Lord, come; and draw us from these present things as out of the lowest deeps; and, leading us safely to that never-decaying life, number us among the quires of those that keep perpetual festivals above. For thou art both light and life, and resurrection, and the joy of those that triumph in the heavens. To thee it becomes us to give, together with the Father and the Holy Ghost, glory, honour, and adoration, now and ever, world without end. Amen[i]."

[i] Georg. Nicomed. Serm. ix. [Auct. Nov. Biblioth. Patr. Græco-Lat. per Combefim, tom. i. col. 1167 sqq.]

CHAP. XII.

Concerning the testimony of the holy apostles of our Lord.

THERE is nothing now wanting to complete this discourse, unless it be to show that, if the testimony of the apostles of our Lord be at all intended, when St. John saith, *He came by Water and Blood and the Spirit,* (as in the former treatise I proved we have reason to think it is,) they also bear witness to this truth; and by them God hath given us this *record,* that *we have eternal life,* and that *this life is in his Son.*

That Jesus had disciples the Talmudists themselves confess[a]: who tell us in the same place where they speak of his being hanged on the evening of the passover, that they were five, *Matthai, Netzer, Nekai, Buni,* and *Thoda.* They do not love to speak the truth, but to the four evangelists (to which perhaps they have respect) they have added one more: and report not one of their names aright, except the first; and in the last have a little varied from the name of Judas the brother of St. James. But thus much we gain from their own records, that known disciples our Saviour had; who professed to believe on him, and owned him for their Lord and Master. These persons, we can make no question, would be careful to communicate to the world what they had received from him; because they looked upon him as the Son of God, and esteemed his words as so many oracles, which his crucifixion could not disparage. Accordingly there are books that pass under their names, besides the four Gospels; which no man ever laid any claim to, or pretended to be the author of, but only themselves: and therefore we have no cause to think they were not of their inditing.

Now if you examine them, you will find that, after his ascension to heaven, and the coming of the Holy Ghost, their business was to go about and preach this truth, and the certainty of it, to all the world, as their Lord and Master had delivered it to them. They were so fully persuaded of it, that they could not forbear to publish such glad tidings of great joy to the whole earth. It was the very end of their apostleship,

[a] Talmud. Bab. Tit. Sanhed. c. vi. [Vid. Jac. Alting. in Schilo, lib. iv. cap. 12. tom. v. p. 87.]

and that which moved them to undertake so great a task; as St. Paul tells us, when he calls himself an *apostle of Jesus Christ by the will of God, according to the promise of life, which is in Christ Jesus*[b]: appointed by God, that is, to publish the promise of eternal life which he had received from Christ Jesus; who would certainly give it to all that believed on him. And it is the very character which the other great apostle gives of himself, that he was *a partaker of the glory that shall be revealed*[c]. This encouraged him to be a *witness of the sufferings of Christ*, as he saith just before, and not to be daunted, as he had been, though he followed him to a cross; because now he clearly saw he had a right as a friend of his (so the word κοινωνὸς signifies, Philem. 17[d]) to a share in that unseen glory where he was, which should one day be revealed.

In this they desired that all mankind might have a portion with them[e], by becoming members of their society. And therefore it was the constant strain of all their sermons, to invite them to it, by showing that Jesus will reward well-doers with the crown of life: and be so far from letting their labour be in vain, that he will do for them as his Father hath done for him, viz. bring them into his own joy. So St. John writes in the very beginning of his Gospel, that *in him was life, and the life was the light of men*[f]. He brought the promise of eternal life, that is, to mankind, and can himself bestow it; which is the best news, the greatest cordial, that can be thought of, to revive our spirits: like the honey on the top of Jonathan's rod, enlightening our eyes, and making us live most cheerfully and happily, if we believe it, and prepare ourselves for it. This they laid as the very ground and foundation of all Christian piety; unto which St. Paul saith it was his office to call men, *in hope of eternal life*[g], which God, that cannot lie, promised of old, but did not manifest till the preaching of the gospel, which was committed to him by the commandment of God our Saviour: who authorized him to open this doctrine more fully than it had been even by our Lord himself while he was on earth. For St. Paul shows that, *at the last day*, so often mentioned by our Lord, he himself will appear again in person, after a visible and glorious manner, to consummate all the

[b] 2 Tim. i. 1. [c] 1 Pet. v. 1. [d] Vid. Scipion. Gentil. ibid. [opp. tom. v. p. 437.] [e] 1 John i. 3. [f] John i. 4. [g] Tit. i. 1, 2, &c.

faithful; whose happiness begins as soon as they depart this life. These two weighty truths are notably asserted by this apostle.

I. Who declares by the *word of the Lord* (that is, a special revelation from our Saviour) the manner of his coming again from heaven, with the attendance of his angels, to raise the dead, and to lift them up to himself, and give them the crown of righteousness; which till that time shall not be bestowed. Read 1 Thess. iv. 15, 16, &c., 2 Tim. iv. 8, where the splendour of that great day, when he will openly appear as the Lord of all, is described no less lovely than magnificently; as I hope to show in another place. It is *the day of rejoicing* [h], because he will then most eminently appear as *our life* [i]; as *our salvation* [k]; *to the praise and honour and glory* of our fidelity [l]. And therefore for this time Christians are said to *wait* and *look* [m], as the time that will complete their felicity; which till then, the apostles plainly suppose, wants its crown and perfection. And so the church hath from the beginning understood them: who describe souls departed as in a state of expectants, waiting for the appearing of our Lord Jesus Christ; who will come out of his most holy temple to perfect those who now stand, as they speak, ἐν προθύροις, 'in the porch,' or entry of it; *in atriis*, as the Latin phrase is, 'in the outward court' of the temple or holy place of God. For as the children of Israel stood in the outward court, (which yet was a part of the ἱερὸν, or *temple*, as we render it,) expecting the priest every day to come out of the sanctuary, and the high-priest on the day of expiation to come out of the holy of holies, to give them the blessing; in such manner do the ancients describe the now blessed waiting and looking without (though in heaven, of which the sanctuary was a figure,) for *that blessed hope* of our Lord's coming out of his most holy place, where he now is, without sin unto their salvation. And thus the best of the Jews express their happiness, saying that pious souls are in *the bundle of life*, (as the most learned Dr. Pocock shows out of Judah Zabara [n],) in the *high place*, in the *treasury*; where they enjoy the *splendour of the divine Majesty*, being *hidden under*

[h] Phil. ii. 16. [i] Col. iii. 4. [k] 1 Cor. v. 5; Heb. ix. 28. [l] 1 Pet. i. 7. [m] 1 Cor. i. 7. Tit. ii. 13. [n] Not. Miscell. cap. vi. p. 176. [Theological Works, vol. i. p. 191.]

the throne of glory. Which phrases signify, a state of imperfection in comparison with that which our Lord Christ (with whom, saith the apostle, *our life is hid,* and kept in safe custody,) will bring us unto at the day of his appearing.

II. But all this time they do not imagine that their souls lie asleep, without any sense of joy and pleasure, no more than the Israelites did, who were at their prayers all the time that the priest was in the sanctuary, desiring God to accept his intercession for them. For what good doth it do them to be in the garden of Eden or pleasure, (as the Jews also call the place where they live,) if they have no taste of its fruits and happy enjoyments? They would be as well any where else as in the bosom of Abraham (by which the same Jews[o], as well as our Saviour, describe this state) if they do not feast there, as that expression properly signifies, and as the parable of Lazarus supposes he did, when it saith, that *now he was comforted,* or enjoyed *his good things,* which made a recompense for all the evil he had here suffered.

The sense of the Christian church in this matter is admirably expressed by St. Greg. Nazianzen: who, comforting himself and others for loss of his brother Cæsarius, concludes with these words: "I am persuaded by the words of the wise, that every soul that is good, and beloved of God, when it is loosed from this body to which it is tied, straightway θαυμασίαν τινὰ ἡδονὴν ἥδεται καὶ ἀγάλλεται, 'conceives a certain wonderful pleasure and rejoices exceedingly,' in the sense and contemplation of the good it expects. Which makes it go most cheerfully to its master, because, being got out of its prison, and having shaken off its fetters, which pinioned the wing of the mind, οἷον ἤδη τῇ φαντασίᾳ καρποῦται τὴν ἀποκειμένην μακαριότητα, 'it already enjoys, as it were, an image of the blessedness laid up for it.' And not long after receiving, out of the earth from whence it came, and where it is deposited, its nearly allied body, (in such a way as God, who tied them together and dissolved them, knows,) it shall together with it inherit the glory there[p]."

And thus St. Paul also plainly teaches us:

[o] Vid. Voysin de Jubil. lib. i. c. 16. [p. 180 sqq.]

[p] Orat. x. p. 173. [ed. Ben. Orat. vii. §. 21. tom. i. pp. 212, 3.]

1. When he relates how he was transported into the *third heaven* and into *paradise;* and, for any thing he knew, out of his body[q]. Which evidently shows he believed that souls could act without their bodies, and that they shall enjoy God, and have a sense of heavenly things, as soon as they depart this life. And so much the Jews themselves well conclude from the spirit of prophecy, whereby holy men of God were separated for a time from their bodies, so as to perceive nothing either by their senses or their minds, but only what God presented to them. The phantasms indeed which they had received from this sensible world were commonly used to represent those things which were then offered to them by divine revelation: but without any assistance of the motions of the body, which lay then as if it was dead; while the soul enjoyed converse and familiar discourse with God. In which condition, it is manifest, St. Paul's mind was so intent to what was communicated unto him, that he did not at all observe whether he had a body about him or no. But there is more than this, if you mark it, in St. Paul's transport into Paradise; where God spoke to him ἄρρητα ῥήματα, mysteries which he could not declare by any words, because no phantasms or images of things he had seen or heard here in this world could express them. Which is a sign he conceived them without any motion of his brain, merely by his spirit.

Of such transports the Hebrews themselves talk, who say four men entered into Paradise[r]: (that is, by the spirit of prophecy:) one of them was too curious, and died presently; another proved distracted after it; a third plucked up the roots, or denied the foundation of religion, saying, אני הגעתי, 'I have already touched the mark,' I am come to perfection, and therefore need not mind the work of the law any longer: a fourth entered in peace, and came out again in peace. Which I recite not as a truth, (for all these stories are told of men who lived since the spirit of prophecy left them,) but to show that they think it not impossible for men to be transported as St. Paul was, (to whom, I imagine, they were ambitious to equal some of their doctors,) but by the power of the Spirit they

[q] 2 Cor. xii. 2, 3.

[r] Sepher Cosri, part. iii. § 65. [p. 245.] Tzemach David. ad An. 4980. [p. 111.]

might enter, while they were inhabitants of this world, into Paradise. Of the sweet enjoyments of which place therefore they cannot sure be uncapable, when they have quite left this body, since the apostle supposes his spirit might go out of it in this rapture; when it perceived and understood things without the use of phantasms, after the manner of intelligences.

2. Wherewith he was so ravished, and so fully assured of future bliss as soon as he died, that he desired above all things to be dissolved, and to be with Christ, which he looked upon as *far better* than to stay here any longer[s]. This eager longing clearly shows what he expected, as soon as he was got loose from this body; and that he did not think death would stupify his soul, and bereave it of all sensation, but rather open to it a freer passage into that delightful place, whither he had some time been caught up. For it would not have been better for him to depart, and to be with Christ, if he should not have had the favour to enjoy that sweet conversation with him there, which was not denied him whilst he was here. He tells us indeed, that when our Lord shall appear, then is the time when we shall *appear with him in glory;* but before this he expected upon his departure to be *with Christ*, though not in so full an enjoyment of him as hereafter. This made him so confident and well assured in his perpetual conflicts with so great troubles and calamities, because he looked upon himself in this present bodily state but as a stranger, who was absent from his own country and friends; to whom he desired to return even in this way, through the midst of many afflictions[t]. Which he repeats ver. 8, *We are confident, I say, and willing rather to be absent from the body, and to be at home with the Lord.* So we render this phrase ἐνδημῆσαι, ver. 6, when he speaks of his being in the body. From which I conclude, that he thought his soul, which while it did ἐνδημῆσαι ἐν τῷ σώματι, 'inhabit the body,' had such a sense of future happiness, as made him resolutely endure all manner of troubles to come at it, would much more enjoy a blissful sense of it when it did ἐνδημῆσαι πρὸς τὸν Κύριον, 'dwell in its own country with the Lord.'

3. Hence you read that those who were dissolved, or rather

[s] Phil. i. 23. [t] 2 Cor. v. 6.

whose souls were torn out of their bodies by the hand of cruel persecutors, cried unto God for vengeance on their murderers[u]. Which argues souls departed do not sleep, and think of nothing that passed here, but are so awake as to remember the gracious promises of God, which they live in expectation to see fulfilled. It may be said indeed, that by ψυχαὶ, *souls*, we are to understand only their blood, as the word is sometimes used in the holy Scriptures; and as I thought, when I writ the former treatise[x], it might be taken here. But upon further consideration I find reason to correct that mistake: for St. John, I observe, speaks of them as *persons* who had *fellow-servants* and *brethren*[y] here upon earth; who were to finish their testimony to Christ by laying down their lives for him, as they had done. Till which time those martyrs were to rest and acquiesce in what they enjoyed already, having obtained very great honour: for there was given ἑκάστοις, *to every one* of them, *white robes*. Mark the place, and you will be satisfied fully that he speaks not of their blood. For St. John saw these souls ὑποκάτω τοῦ θυσιαστηρίου, *under* or *beneath the altar*, of incense, that is, (as a great man hath proved[z]:) whereas the blood of the sacrifices was poured out at the bottom of the altar in the outward court. They were not without, but in the sanctuary, though in the lower part of it, beneath the altar of incense; nor yet advanced to the higher part of it, much less to the holiest of all. They were admitted, that is, unto a greater nearness to God than others, (as the church always believed the martyrs were,) though not yet consummated; as the apostle St. Paul supposes himself should not be till the day of Christ's appearing. But St. John adds, (2) that they had *white robes* given them in that place where they were: which signifies they were a kind of heavenly ministers attending on the divine Majesty, or that they had exceeding great honour conferred on them[a]: which would have done them no good at all, if they had not been sensible of the favour of God therein, and lived in great joy and festival

[u] Rev. vi. 9.
[x] Vid. ch. viii. [vol. ii. p. 589.]
[y] Rev. vi. 11.
[z] Mr. Thorndike, Rights of the Church, p. 95, 310. [vol. i. pp. 466, 615.]
[a] Gen. xli. 42.

pleasures; which *white raiment* also in the holy languages uses to denote[b].

And thus the Jews themselves, I observe, are apt to speak of this matter; making the description of the city and temple in the latter end of Ezekiel to be a representation of the other world. For when it is affirmed by one doctor in the Talmud[c], that there were not above six and thirty just men in every age that behold the face of God; and another objects, that the court about the city (called *The Lord is there*) was exceeding great, no less than *eighteen thousand measures* round[d]; this answer is returned, that the difficulty is small: for some behold the very light of God; others only see it obliquely, and have no more but a certain obscure duskish image of it. There are but few of the former, saith the Gloss there, who have the light in its power; but of the other, who have a weaker ray, obliquely and at a distance, there are very great numbers. Which agrees with those words of our Saviour, *In my Father's house are many mansions*, as they are expounded by the two St. Gregories, Nazianzen and Nyssen, and others: who by a *mansion* understand τὴν ἐκεῖθεν ἀνάπαυσιν[e], &c., the rest and the glory which is laid up there for the blessed; but suppose some to be in a higher, others in a lower condition, proportionable to the virtuous dispositions they carried out of the world with them. Which being very different, they believed some to see less; and others to be like Gorgonia, the sister of St. Greg. Nazianzen, whom, in the conclusion of the eleventh oration, he supposes to be 'in the clear light of the glorious Trinity.'

4. But it would take up too much room in this treatise if I should enter into that discourse; and therefore I proceed to consider, that though they made this difference, according as we see in a city (to follow the former comparison), some are accounted the chief, others the more inferior streets and houses, and some are nearer unto, others more remote from, the royal palace; yet they did not imagine those mansions to be dark, nor those that were in them to have their eyes shut up with

[b] Eccles. ix. 8.

[c] Vid. Coch. exc. Gem. Sanhedrin, c. xi. n. 30. [tom. ix. p. 242.]

[d] Ezek. xlviii. 35.

[e] Nazianz. Orat. 33. [ed. Ben. Orat. xxvii. §. 8. tom. i. p. 493 B.]

sleep, but all to enjoy the light of life. They lead, as another Jewish writer speaks[f], a most sweet life in that light, which is the figure and resemblance of the supreme light, to which they shall be admitted at the last. Thus Moses and Elias appeared in great splendour at our Saviour's transfiguration on the holy mount, where they talked and discoursed with him about his departure that he was to accomplish at Jerusalem: which shows they not only continued in being, but had sense and motion, and lived in much happiness and bliss. Which we are not to take for a singular privilege indulged to them, for the apostles, you may observe again, looked upon our Saviour as the εἰκὼν, *exemplar* or *pattern*, to which God had determined they should all be *conformed*[g]. And their conformity to him here in this world being so exact, that they passed the very same way to bliss that he did, through most cruel sufferings, they could not doubt but upon their departure the conformity would still hold as exactly. That as he, when he died, immediately went to Paradise, (where he promised the good thief should be before his resurrection,) so they should enter into the same blessed place immediately upon their death, and live there in a joyful expectation of him to come and change even this vile body, that it may be σύμμορφος, *conformed* to his glorious body[h].

And this is the sense also, you may observe once more, of the *voice from heaven*, which commanded St. John to write, *Blessed are the dead which die in the Lord*[i]. With which the Spirit immediately joined its testimony, saying, Ναὶ, *Yea*, (i. e. it is certainly true, believe what the *voice* says,) *from henceforth*, or now at this present, I promise them a blessed *rest from their labours*, and *their works shall follow with them:* that is, they shall be refreshed with a sweet remembrance of what they have done and suffered for Christ Jesus. It is uncertain indeed whether the word ἀπάρτι be to be referred to the former words, *Blessed are the dead which die in the Lord*, or to those that follow, *Yea, saith the Spirit:* but either way our church understands it in the same sense, as ap-

[f] Vid. Jo. de Voysin de Jubilæo, l. i. cap. 16. [p. 186. e libro Nephesch Chocmah, cap. 2.]

[g] Rom. viii. 29.

[h] Phil. iii. 21.

[i] Rev. xiv. 13.

pears by the funeral office: where, referring it to the former sentence, the words are thus recited; *I heard a voice from heaven, saying, Write, from henceforth* (or now, at this present time,) *blessed are the dead*, &c. They are not only in expectance of future blessedness, but in possession of an happy state already; and find inconceivable satisfaction in venturing their very lives for Christ's sake: who, for this very end, as St. Paul observes, laid down his life for us, that *whether we wake, or whether we sleep, we should live together with him* [k].

There are those who from this word *sleep* (by which the state of the dead is frequently called in these books, there being nothing liker death than sleep) would infer the perpetual motion and operation of the soul before the resurrection: for it is very busy and active, even when all the senses are locked up by sleep, and hath at that time received very high illuminations from God: which is a sign that if the body were quite dead it would not be without them. Aristotle, I find in Sextus Empiricus[l], observes thus much, that in sleep, when the soul is by herself, ἀπολαβοῦσα τὴν ἴδιον φύσιν, 'resuming her own nature,' she prophesies and foretells things to come; and declares, saith he, hereby what she shall be ἐν τῷ κατὰ θάνατον χωρίζεσθαι τῶν σωμάτων, 'when by death she shall be separated from all bodily things.' By which consideration, St. Austin tells us, that Gennadius, a famous physician in his time, and very religious and charitable, was wonderfully enlightened, when he was in doubt whether there was any life after death. "God," saith he[m], "would by no means desert a mind so well disposed; but there appeared one night to him, in his sleep, a very handsome young man, who bid him follow whither he should lead him. Which he thought he did, till he came to a city, where on the right side he was saluted with the sweetest voices that ever he heard; which the young man, upon his inquiry what this meant, told him were the hymns of the blessed and of the saints. What he saw on the left side, he did not well remember; but awaking, he looked upon this as a dream, and thought no further of it: till some time after the

[k] 1 Thess. v. 10.

[l] L. viii. adv. Mathemat. p. 312. [lib. ix. §. 21. tom. ii. p. 544.]

[m] Epist. 100. ad Evodium. [ed. Ben. Epist. clix. tom. ii. col. 565.]

same young man appeared again to him another night, and asked if he knew him. To which he answering, Yes, very well, he asked him where he had seen him. And Gennadius presently related how by his conduct he was once led to hear the hymns and see the sight before mentioned. Here the young man asked him, whether he saw and heard what he related in his sleep or waking. In my sleep, said Gennadius. True, said the other; and now thou seest me in thy sleep, dost thou not? To which he consenting, his instructor proceeded to ask him, Where is thy body now? In my bedchamber, said Gennadius. Dost thou know then, replied the young man, that thy eyes are now bound up, and shut, and lie idle in that body, so that with them thou seest nothing? I know it, said Gennadius. What eyes then are these, said his instructor again, wherewith thou seest me? Here, Gennadius being silent, not knowing what to say, the young man laid hold of this occasion to open to him the meaning of all these questions; saying, Those eyes of thy flesh, which is asleep, and lies in thy bed, have no employment and do nothing at all; and yet thou hast eyes wherewith thou seest me. Just so when thou art dead, and the eyes of thy flesh are put out and can do nothing, *vita tibi inerit, qua vivas, sensusque, quo sentias*, 'there will be life in thee, whereby to live, and sense, whereby to perceive.' Beware now hereafter how thou doubtest that life remains after death." And thus, that faithful man told St. Austin, the providence and mercy of God quite removed his doubt.

But I shall not insist on such reasons as these, my intention being only to show what we learn from the apostles, the faithful witnesses of Jesus Christ, to confute that drowsy conceit of the sleep of the soul; which, like a thistle, sprung up first[n] in the wild deserts of Arabia, but ought not to be suffered to grow in the garden of God. In which this doctrine of the apostles, I might show, hath been so deeply rooted; that to testify the church's belief of it, was one great end of the commemorations and prayers which were made for the faithful departed this life. So we learn from Epiphanius his confutation of Aerius, who did not approve of this practice. The very first

[n] Euseb. Hist. Eccl. l. vi. c. 37. [p. 299.]

account he gives of it is, that those who were present might believe ὅτι οἱ ἀπελθόντες ζῶσι, &c., 'that they who were departed live,' and are not gone out of being, but exist and live with the Lord[o]. And they did not suppose, I may add, that those whom they remembered in their sacred offices were frying in the flames of hell, as the present Roman church doth; but in a state of happiness, though imperfect, and some more imperfect than other. This we learn from the service of the church in those days, especially at the funerals of the departed. Whensoever they celebrated the dreadful mysteries, together with the holy martyrs, and confessors, and priests, whom they commemorated, they prayed for the whole world, for which Christ's blood was an expiation; not forgetting those who slept in him, whom the priest desired those who were present to remember. For we are all one body, (saith St. Chrysostom[p], who reports this,) though one member be brighter than another; and therefore they desired all might have συγγνώμην καὶ παραμυθίαν, 'pardon and consolation.' Which they hoped they had, it is plain from the funeral office, which, in great part, was eucharistical, consisting of psalms and hallelujahs. So the same great person informs us in his Commentaries on the Epistle to the Hebrews, where he takes occasion from those words *deliver them who through fear of death*[q], &c. to reprehend the bitter lamentations and wailings of those who mourned for their dead friends, as altogether inconsistent with what the church did at their funerals: where the bright lamps[r] they saw burning proclaimed that they attended them as valiant champions; and the hymns that were sung glorified God, and gave him thanks for crowning him that was departed, and for freeing him from his labours, and for delivering him from a state of fear, that he might have him with himself. "Are not the hymns," saith he, "for this end? is not this the meaning of the singing psalms? ταῦτα πάντα χαιρόντων ἐστίν· and 'all these things are proper to those that rejoice:' according to that of St. James, *Is any well pleased, let him sing psalms.*" And a little after he bids them mind what

[o] Hæres. lxxv. n. 7. [tom. i. p. 911 A.]

[p] Hom. xli. in 1 Cor. p. 524. 20. [ed. Ben. tom. x. p. 392, 3.]

[q] ii. 15.

[r] Hom. iv. p. 453. 35; 454. 10. [ed. Ben. tom. xii. p. 46, 7.]

they sung at those solemnities:—*Return unto thy rest, O my soul, for the Lord hath dealt bountifully with thee:* and, *I will fear no evils, for thou art with me:* and again, *Thou art my refuge from the affliction that compasseth me about.* This was part of the funeral service, to which he tells them they did not attend, but were drunk with sorrow; or else they would not have made such lamentations. For to say, *Return unto thy rest, O my soul, for the Lord hath dealt bountifully with thee*[s], and yet to weep and lament, is a mockery and a stage-play, not a serious piece of devotion. This and much more that great man there says, to show how preposterous it was to mix their lamentations with those hymns: which supposed the souls of the deceased to be in rest and peace, and to partake liberally of the bounteous goodness of God; and therefore ought to have composed and comforted the minds of the living, who confessed their friends had made a blessed change of a troublesome life, for one full of quiet and happy repose. To which the order of burial in our church, which professes to tread in the steps of the first ages of Christianity, is very conformable: where we sing, *Blessed are the dead which die in the Lord*, &c., and acknowledge that "we ought not to be sorry as men without hope, for them that sleep in him[t];" because the spirits of them that depart hence in the Lord do live with God; and, "being delivered from the burden of the flesh, are in joy and felicity." Not complete indeed, but we pray him (after we have given thanks for delivering our brother "out of the miseries of this sinful world") "to hasten his kingdom, that we, with all those that are departed in the true faith of his holy name, may have our perfect consummation and bliss both in body and soul in his eternal and everlasting glory."

But it is not my business, as I said, to seek for testimonies to this truth any lower than from the apostles themselves, who, as they preached the glad tidings of eternal life everywhere, so they protest most solemnly (and they were men, you shall hear, who taught and practised the strictest truth and honesty) that they had a most certain knowledge of it; and therefore we may safely rely upon their testimony. Those words wherewith St. John begins his first Epistle may serve instead of all that might be alleged to assert this[u]; where he gives an ac-

[s] [Ps. cxvi. 7.] [t] [1 Thess. iv. 13.] [u] 1 John i. 1, 2, 3.

count of the reason they had to publish to the world that *Word of life* (Jesus and his gospel), as they had done a long time. "For they said nothing concerning that eternal life which it was in the purpose of God the Father from the beginning to bestow, and now was manifested to them, but what they had *heard*, that is, received from his own mouth, and been constant auditors of: which made them the more confident to declare these things to others, because they had them not at the second hand, but immediately from himself."

And because it is the least of testimonies to say we have heard a thing, therefore he adds, in the second place, that they had *seen* it; beheld, that is, all the marvellous works he did to confirm this doctrine which he delivered, as the word *seen* seems to be understood John xv. 24; *If I had not done among them the works which none other man did, they had not had sin: but now they have seen and yet hated both me and my Father.* They *saw* the vast numbers that he fed with a little food, the sick that he cured with speaking a word, the dead that he raised when all their friends gave them for lost, and despaired of seeing them again in this world: in short, so many instances of his divine power and authority, that *if they should have been written every one*, this apostle supposes *the world would not have been able to contain the books that should have been written*[t]. *But these are recorded* which we find in the gospel, as he concludes the foregoing chapter, *that we might believe that Jesus is the Son of God, and that believing we might have life through his name.*

And lest any should imagine it was but a transient sight they had of these things, and their eyes might be deluded (as we sometimes are when a thing suddenly flies away from us), or that they were but seldom spectators of these things, and so could not gather much from thence, he adds, in the third place, that they had *looked* on it; that is, had this evidence continually before their eyes. They scarce saw any thing else but miracles. They had not leisure ofttimes so much as to eat their meat by reason of the great multitude of people that came to be healed by him. They conversed a long time with Lazarus after he was risen; and our Lord himself was *seen* of

[t] John xxi. 25.

them *forty days* after his resurrection, *speaking of the things pertaining to the kingdom of God*[u]. And when the Holy Ghost came, they themselves, to whom the apostle here writes, could testify the wonderful variety of spiritual gifts that were poured on believers.

But because we imagine that to *feel* a thing is far more considerable for our satisfaction than to *see* it or look upon it; (as St. Thomas would not believe those who had seen our Lord and heard him speak, but he would put his hands into his wounds before he would be satisfied;) therefore the apostle tells us further, that they declared nothing but what they had *handled* of the *Word of life*. That is, there was most palpable evidence and demonstration given of the truth of their report. They were so near as to touch and feel that their eyes were not deceived, when they thought they saw such miracles wrought: for their own hands distributed the bread and the fish to the hungry multitude; and some of them untied the grave-clothes of Lazarus when he was raised from the dead: and (to give one instance for all) when he himself rose again from his grave, they not only discoursed with him, and saw him eat and drink, and beheld him several times and in several places, but he called them to him, and said, *Behold my hands and my feet: handle me and see; for a spirit hath not flesh and bones, as you see me have*[x]. This very *handling* of him was a greater argument of the eternal life which was with the Father, but was hereby made manifest unto us; for it proves his resurrection, and that is a proof of ours.

Now they having thus *heard*, and *seen*, and *beheld*, and *handled* these things, how could they choose but publish that Jesus is the Author of eternal life? And we receiving such testimony from them, how can we refuse to believe their word, that we may have fellowship with them in God and his Son, i. e. be partakers, as they were, in that most blessed life of God and our Saviour Jesus Christ? If we do but believe there were such men as St. John and St. Paul and all the rest; and if they had eyes and ears and hands like other men; if they were men of sound brains and understandings (as it appears by their writings they were); if any credit may be given to sober

[u] [Acts i. 3.] [x] Luke xxiv. 39.

persons, who protest they heard those voices from heaven, saw those miracles which they have recorded, conversed with our Saviour after he rose from the dead (as there are no writers in the world deserve credit, if they do not); nay, if they deserve more credit than any, considering what they did and suffered, as you shall hear, for the testimony of that which they saw and heard, and wrote to the world; there is no doubt this life was manifested most apparently to them, and they had reason to bear witness of it, and show it to us: and we cannot but rest satisfied that it is the will of God to give eternal life by his Son Jesus Christ our Lord. No question to be made of it, unless we will question all histories in the world, and believe nothing that is reported and delivered to us by others: which if it were once resolved, there would be an end of most of the trade, commerce, and business that is managed in the world; and deeds and evidences which men have from their ancestors would become void, and present possession would be the only title they could have to their estates.

But, for our further satisfaction, let me briefly show, that the apostles gave a continued testimony to this truth, all the three ways whereby St. John saith *he came, by Water, by Blood, and by the Spirit.*

I.

As for the purity of their doctrine, which is one part of the testimony of Water, I have given an account of it in the first part of this discourse: which demonstrates it was of that nature, that it had been an idle attempt to preach it, and endeavour to plant it in the world, had they not believed and been able to prove that their Master, who employed them, would give them and all those who obeyed their word the reward of eternal life. To which if you add the holiness of their life, which is another part of this testimony, you cannot think that men of such sincerity in all other things would have affirmed so confidently as they did that which they did not take to be true; nor have protested they saw and heard and felt such things as they never had any notice of. But if you will needs suppose they might be so vile (which is very unreasonable), yet who can think they would have denied themselves so much as they did for their Master's sake, in which a great part of their piety consisted, if they had not been sure that he would

lead them by such means to everlasting life? This extraordinary contempt of all present things, even of life itself, as you shall hear, plainly showed they were not merely big words which they spake of being with God and our Saviour, to see the glory which the Father had given him; but things which they heartily expected. For does any man find such inclinations in himself as should make him imagine they would have left their trades, their houses, their possessions, their wives, kindred, friends, all that is desirable in this world, and persuade those who were the dearest to them to do so too, if they had not had an assurance, upon such grounds as were apt to convince others as well as them, of the recompense they should meet withal hereafter in a better life? Who can believe that St. Paul would have quitted all his dignities, his hopes of greater preferment, his esteem and reputation with the wisest and chiefest persons in the nation, his ease and quiet, and every thing else, and betaken himself to the troublesome service of a despicable Master, if he had not known and seen it as clearly as the sun in the firmament, that Jesus, whom he served, was raised from the dead, and made the King of glory, and would prefer all those that proved faithful to him unto the greatest honour in the heavens? For what reason should those good men live *as having nothing*, and all the time be as cheerful as if they *possessed all things?* Did they not look upon themselves, think you, as heirs of a kingdom which could not be taken away from them? Read St. Paul's description of himself to Timothy[y], who, he says, had *fully known his doctrine and manner of life*, (not only what he had been wont to teach, but how he had followed his own instructions,) what his purpose and aim had ever been, his fidelity, his lenity towards offenders, his charity to all Christians, his patience under troubles of all sorts; for he was persecuted and endured great afflictions by that means at Antioch, (where they thrust him out of the city,) at Iconium, (where an assault was made upon him to stone him,) at Lystra, (where they actually stoned him.) And in how many other places he had been vilely used, Timothy, he says, could not be ignorant, having been a companion with him in his travels[z]. Now what think you of such a person as this? Do

[y] 2 Tim. iii. 10, 11. [z] Acts xvi. 3.

you take him for a dolt and an ignorant sot? Was this great apostle a mere lump of clay, who was sensible of nothing, and imagined others so senseless as that he might without any reason propound this example to Timothy for his imitation? How came they to be so stupified as to choose rods, and whips, and stones, and all other miseries, when they might have lived in ease and peace? nay, to *glory* in these things alone, as if there had been nothing that could have done them such honour[a]? They did *both hunger and thirst* (as I noted from the same apostle in my former book); *they were naked and buffeted; they had no certain dwelling-place; they laboured, working with their own hands; being reviled they blessed, being persecuted they suffered it; they were made as the filth of the world, and the offscouring of all things*[b]. Which things nobody in his wits can think men of their understanding would have endured, if they had not been provided of *meat which the world knew not of*, and been nourished and sustained with the *hope of glory*, and assured of *eternal mansions in the heavens*, and known that they should *inherit a blessing*, and be made more honourable and glorious with Jesus for ever than the world for the present could make them vile and contemptible.

These things are so clear, that the bare recital of them is sufficient to satisfy us they were no deceivers, nor men of light belief, who took things upon trust without good evidence; but had the greatest reason to endeavour to *baptize* all nations into this belief, as they did by an indefatigable diligence: which was no small testimony of the power and glory of the Lord Jesus.

II.

And their *blood* speaks as much. For as *none of them*, saith St. Paul, *lived to himself*, so *none of them died to himself*[c]; but consecrated even his *blood* to the service of Christ, if he pleased to command it. Whereby they sealed to this truth; and showed they were so far from doubting of immortal life by the Lord Jesus, that they unfeignedly desired to be dissolved, and to be with him. Witness St. Stephen, who was stoned because he said he saw the Lord Jesus in the highest glory;

[a] 2 Cor. xii. 5. [b] 1 Cor. iv. 11—13. [c] Rom. xiv. 7.

which he was never more assured of than when he died; for then he recommended his spirit to him, as our Saviour had done his to God the Father. Witness Antipas, a faithful martyr. Witness all those souls whom St. John saw beneath the altar: who had all learnt from our Saviour what they must expect in his service, when he said, *The brother shall deliver up the brother to death, and the father the child; and the children shall rise up against their parents, and cause them to be put to death. And ye shall be hated of all men for my name's sake.* Under which afflictions they had nothing to support them but that which he immediately adds, *He that endureth to the end shall be saved*[d]. These few words were a sufficient encouragement to them, and made them not regard their lives for the sake of Christ Jesus; who *hath abolished death, and brought life and immortality to light through the gospel. For the which cause*, saith St. Paul, *I suffer these things, and am not ashamed; for I know whom I have believed, and am persuaded that he is able to keep that which I have committed to him against that day*[e]. And for this cause he would not have Timothy to be *ashamed of the testimony of our Lord, nor of him his prisoner*[f]; but to imitate him by being *partaker of the afflictions of the gospel;* which *he endured*, as he adds in the next chapter[g], *for the elects' sake, that they also might obtain the salvation that is in Christ Jesus with eternal glory.* The apostles nothing doubted that they themselves should obtain salvation and immortal glory this way: and they hoped likewise, by their constant sufferings even to the death, to draw others also to the faith, or confirm them in it; that they might have a share with them in this happiness, and be willing to suffer for it. *For it is a faithful saying*, he adds, *that if we be dead with him, we shall also live with him: if we suffer with him, we shall also reign with him*[h].

I shall conclude this with that discourse of St. Paul, 1 Cor. xv. 30, 31, 32, where he alleges this among other reasons to confirm that church in the belief of the resurrection of the dead, and the life of the world to come, that he and the rest of the preachers of Christian religion would not have been such fools,

[d] Matt. x. 21, 22. [e] 2 Tim. i. 10, 12. [f] Ver. 8. [g] Ver. 10. [h] Ver. 11, 12.

as to have suffered in that manner they did, had they not seen plain demonstrations of this truth. For they were so miserably treated, that they carried their lives in their hand; and were every hour, for any thing they knew, at the brink of the grave. He for his part had been compelled to encounter with wild beasts on the theatre at Ephesus: (so some ancient writers understand him, who knew there was nothing more common with the pagans than to cry, *Christiani ad leones,* 'Away with the Christians to the lions:' and it was a punishment to which the vilest malefactors were subject, particularly magicians; as we learn from another Paul the lawyer[1]:) or at least, he ran as great hazards as those men did who were exposed unarmed to the fiercest creatures, such as lions, bears, tigers, leopards, wild boars and bulls, and dogs. (To every one of which we have examples of Christians, in the ecclesiastical story, that were condemned.) And it was for no other cause but this, that he preached Jesus and the resurrection. How could they think him so senseless as to put his life in such danger upon this account, if he was not fully persuaded of that for which he suffered so much; nay, had not good ground to be of this belief? He knew the value of life as well as other men. He was no stone nor block, as I have said, that had no feeling of pain. He naturally loved ease and quiet and pleasure, as well as the rest of the world. And his education had not been such as to incline him to believe things carelessly; especially such a thing as this, quite contrary to all his former principles, and as contrary to his present preferments and future hopes. And therefore, without imputing to him the highest degree of folly and stupidity, the Corinthians could not disbelieve what he preached of the life to come. Concerning which he had received such full satisfaction, and was convinced of it by such undeniable arguments, that he chose rather to lose his life than to deny it, or not to preach it.

III.

And that he and the rest of the apostles were not deceived, nor judged amiss in this matter, the mighty power of the *Spi-*

[1] L.v. de receptis sententiis. ["Magicæ artis conscios summo supplicio adfici placuit, id est, bestiis objici, aut cruci suffigi," lib. v. tit. 23. § 17. apud Meerman. Nov. Thes. Jur. tom. vii. p. 733.]

rit, which wrought continually in them and with them, abundantly testified. This was sufficient not only to satisfy them, but to satisfy the rest of the world, that Jesus, as they said, was alive, and made the Lord of all: who was ready at hand on all occasions to bear witness to this truth when they preached it, that he would give *eternal life* unto his followers. This power of the *Spirit* going along with them was a thing so notorious, that the pagans in some places cried out, *The gods are come down to us in the likeness of men*[k]; and could scarce be restrained from doing divine honours to them. And whereas there had been some wonderful things heretofore done among the Jews, if we may believe themselves, they now all ceased; as if God had transferred all power on earth into the apostles' hands. For they tell us, there were ten signs in the house of the sanctuary[l], which never failed: as, that no woman ever miscarried by the smell of the flesh that was burnt upon the altar; no fly was ever seen in the house; nor did the flesh of the sanctuary ever stink; nor the rain ever extinguish the fire; nor the greatest winds hinder the smoke from ascending in a straight pillar towards heaven, &c. But forty years before the sanctuary was destroyed, all these miracles ceased; according to that of the Psalmist, (which they apply to this business[m],) *We see not our signs, nor is there any prophet to tell us how long*[n]. When the veil of the temple was rent in sunder, God, who dwelt in the holy place, left his habitation, and went out at that breach to return no more thither. All the wonders were now without those doors, in the open streets, in every house, in the whole world. Which was a notable *sign* that Jesus was Christ, and alive from the dead, by whose power the apostles professed to do all their wonderful works.

By these they proved that he was exalted at God's right hand, and sat, as he said he would, on the throne of his glory. And their proof was the stronger, because there was no great thing done (as formerly there had) but only what was wrought by their hands; who reigned now with him as so many princes, and *sat on twelve thrones judging the twelve tribes of Israel*[o].

[k] Acts xiv. 11, 18.

[l] Pirke Avoth, c. v. [p. 98.]

[m] Talmud Bab. in Joma apud Raimund. p. 297. [Pug. fid. p. 371. fol. Lips. 1687.]

[n] Psalm lxxiv. 9.

[o] Matt. xix. 28; Luke xxii. 30.

They were supreme governors (whose office it is to *judge*) in the church under our Lord Christ, it plainly appeared by the mighty power wherewith their gospel was accompanied; which came, as St. Paul tells the Thessalonians, not in *word* only, but in *power and in the Holy Ghost;* that is, in miraculous works, and in extraordinary gifts, which brought along with them *a full assurance:* insomuch that he left it to them to tell the world *what manner of men they were among them.* And if any inquire what was the effect of it, he tells us, that they were persuaded by this miraculous power, *to turn from idols, to serve the living and true God; and to wait for his Son from heaven, whom he raised from the dead, even Jesus, which delivered us from the wrath to come*[p]. This was the fruit of their labours and travels, to convince a number of people, by wonderful operations upon the sick, nay upon the dead, and by gifts of the Holy Ghost, that Jesus was raised from the dead, and possessed of eternal life in the heavens; from whence he will come to bestow it upon the faithful; whom he will never suffer to perish, but rescuing them from destruction, make them ever happy with himself.

And whosoever afterward revolted from this faith, I may add, and set themselves to oppose it, the apostles showed their power (which was a great witness to Christianity) as much in their plagues and punishments, as in the cures they wrought upon others. It may well be thought, that those in the Corinthian church who did not believe the resurrection, were reclaimed from their error by that letter which St. Paul wrote to them; for we hear nothing of it more in the next epistle. But some there were in other places that obstinately persisted in their folly; and, not contented to disbelieve what the apostles taught in this matter, contradicted and blasphemed it. Two of them are named in 2 Tim. ii. 17, 18, *Hymeneus and Philetus,* who taught *that the resurrection was past,* and consequently denied the rewards of the life to come. The occasion of their *erring* thus *from the faith* seems to have been this, that the apostles often speaking of a spiritual resurrection from a state of sin to the life of godliness[q], which they supposed all Christians had already felt; these men fancied there was no other, affirming the resurrection was past, and none to come. If they

[p] 1 Thess. i. 9, 10. [q] Rom. vi. Col. iii.

had only doubted of it, the apostle, it is like, would not have so sharply punished them, no more than he did the Corinthians; but *they blasphemed*, as he expressly tells us of Hymeneus [r], that is, reproached this doctrine as a foolish opinion; and reviled, it is like, the apostles who were the preachers of it. And therefore he inflicted on them the most grievous punishment, by *delivering them up to Satan:* which was not so little as merely banishing them the Christian society, but turning them over to the power of the devil, οἷον δημίῳ τινὶ στρεβλοῦντι καὶ μαστίζοντι, 'as unto a public executioner, to torture and scourge them.' They are the words of St. Basil [s], with whom agree divers others of the ancient doctors; who think the apostle speaks of surrendering such persons into his hands, that he might inflict bodily diseases or pains upon them, to humble and bring them down to submit to the apostolical doctrine, when they felt the miraculous effects of their authority. For that is the reason this punishment is called *delivering up to Satan;* because it visibly appeared by some plagues on the body, that they were fallen under his power, by being thrown out of the church. He was a common gaoler and executioner in a city or kingdom; the apostles, as the magistrates and governors, (as was said before,) sitting upon thrones to judge and pass sentence on men: either by giving the Holy Ghost to those who sincerely believed; or by delivering those to be tormented and set on the rack by this evil spirit, who blasphemed the Christian religion. There was then no other power in the church to correct and punish them for so high a crime; and this being done *by the power of our Lord Jesus Christ,* (as you read 1 Cor. v. 4.) was a notable testimony of the *Spirit* to the truth of Christianity, and bade all men beware how they spake evil of this holy doctrine; especially of this fundamental part of it, that the Lord Jesus will give us everlasting life, and raise us up at the last day. The terrible execution which they saw done upon those who subverted this foundation of all piety, was a great means to confirm all Christian people in the faith: and to make them reverence those who had this mighty power, either to give men ease, or to torment them; to restore men to

[r] 1 Tim. i. 20.

[s] Homil. in princip. Proverb. [hom. xii. de divers. tom. ii. p. 101 E.]

life, or to strike them dead; to give them, as was said before, the gifts of the Holy Ghost, or to put them into the possession of the devil.

There is a great deal of difference, it is observed by Tertullian[t], between an *angel of Satan* sent to *buffet* a man; and being *delivered up*, or put into the possession of Satan himself. To the former St. Paul himself was, by the divine permission, obnoxious for his exercise[u]. The latter was the punishment of blasphemers, and other horrid offenders, for their cure. But both served to give a testimony to our Saviour, and to settle the hope of immortal life. For by the *angel of Satan which buffeted*, that is, disgraced and vexed St. Paul, a great many ancient writers[x] understand those troubles and sore afflictions, all sorts of injuries and reproaches which infidels and wicked men, by the instinct of some of the devil's agents, tormented the apostle withal. "Alexander the coppersmith, (saith St. Chrysostom,) who did Paul so much mischief, Hymeneus and Philetus, all those that set themselves against the gospel, cast him into prison, beat him, drove him out of their cities, were ministers of Satan, ἐπειδὴ τὰ τοῦ Σατανᾶ ἔπραττον, 'because they did Satan's business,' who by such instruments laboured all he could to dishearten the apostles, and hinder the free course of the gospel." Here now appeared the mighty power of Christ, which *rested*, as the apostle speaks, or took up its dwelling in them[y]. They were never so strong as when they were thus afflicted. Then they mightily prevailed, and advanced the kingdom of Christ, by whose powerful grace they endured all hardships and distresses courageously: and demonstrated they had a strong and immovable hope of being with him in that blessed place, unto which St. Paul was rapt just before this *messenger of Satan*, as we render it, raised such a terrible storm of persecution against him. By that glorious sight he was fortified against it, and, standing as firm as a rock himself, confirmed others in that faith, which made him so invincible, that he *gloried* and *took pleasure* in all those *infirmities, and*

[t] L. de Pudicitia, c. xiii. [p. 565.]
[u] 2 Cor. xii. 7.
[x] S. Chrysostom. [tom. x. p. 621 A.] Theodoret. [tom. iii. p. 349.] Photius apud Œcumen. [p. 696 D.] Ambros. [pseud-Ambros. tom. ii. col. 205 A.] Theophylact. [tom. ii. p. 311 D.]
[y] 2 Cor. xii. 9.

reproaches, and necessities, and persecutions, and distresses, which that angel of Satan stirred up against him[a]. That was all the devil got by his ill usage of him, which only gave the apostle matter of glory. For when our Saviour pleased not to grant his desire of having this angel removed, but only told him *his grace should be sufficient for him;* immediately he adds, that he would *gladly glory more than ever in his afflictions.* Which plainly shows, both what he meant by that *angel of Satan;* and how much hereby the Christian religion was promoted, and the souls of believers strengthened in the faith. They might easily believe he had been in the *third heavens,* when they saw him so much superior to all the power on earth, and the powers of the air too; who conspired to beat him down and oppress him. All the art in the world could not so declare the ἄρρητα ῥήματα, the *unutterable words* St. Paul heard, (which the impious Cainites and Gnostics[b], in a book of theirs called Ἀναβατικὸν, concerning St. Paul's ascent, pretended to relate, as this inexpressible power of Christ residing in him, and supporting him under the greatest miseries; which declared those words remained still imprinted in his mind.

And that other *power of Christ,* whereby the apostle delivered up high offenders to Satan, (that he might inflict plagues and diseases or aches and pains on their bodies,) as evidently showed what a great minister he was in Christ's kingdom; and how credible the doctrine was which he preached to them. For he was *ready to revenge all disobedience* with remarkable punishments; and alleges this power as a proof of his authority, in the next chapter: *If I come again, I will not spare, since you seek a proof of Christ speaking in me.* "He is not *weak indeed towards you, but is mighty in you*[c]: (having given by me exceeding great demonstrations of his power and my apostleship[d].) Yet since you are not convinced, it seems, by what you have seen already, and desire a further proof that Christ speaks in me, you shall have it; *I will not spare you;* that is, I will punish you, and make you know it to your cost. *For though Christ was crucified through weakness,* (i. e. according to his mortal condition which he assumed

[a] 2 Cor. xii. 9, 10. [b] Epiphan. Hæres. xxxviii. [§ 2. tom. i. p. 277 C.]
[c] 2 Cor. xiii. 2, 3, 4. [d] xii. 12.

for our sake,) *yet he lives by the power of God,* which raised him from the dead, and gave him all power in heaven and earth. You ought not therefore to comtemn one because he is weak, i. e. afflicted, as you are apt to do me; for Christ went this way to glory: and *though we also are weak in,* or *with, him,* i. e. suffer for his sake, which is no more than he did; *we shall live with him by the power of God toward you;* that is, make you feel, that as he is alive, (i. e. mighty and strong now that he is raised from the dead,) so are we also by the power of God, which we shall make use of for chastising your insolence." Which plainly shows that these apostolical censures had most mighty effects; which demonstrated Christ was alive, and wrought most powerfully in these his ministers. By whom as he gave miraculous gifts, so he miraculously punished offenders; and never more terribly than when they were in such a weak (that is, afflicted) condition, that it tempted some people to contemn them. Then they showed their power, and made it appear that, as *he, who was crucified, lived;* so did they, who were persecuted and despised: being armed with divine weapons or engines, which were mighty through God to batter down the strongest holds; subverting the pitiful reasonings of such as Hymeneus and Philetus, and making every proud conceit stoop, which advanced itself against the Christian doctrine[e]. This they did by the power I am speaking of, which baffled all opposers, and made them crouch as so many captives to these ministers of Jesus Christ: who in their external condition were mean, and exposed to the scorn and contempt of all the world; but so mighty and great by this authority, that the apostle saith[f], it had not been vanity, if he had boasted of it more than he did. For this apostolical *rod,* as he calls it[g], was like the *rod of God*[h] in the hand of Moses. It did miraculous things by inflicting terrible punishments, for which no cause but his heavy censure appeared, on those who contradicted and blasphemed, and was as sensible a sign of the presence of God in the church, as the things which the rod of Moses did were of his presence with the ancient Israelites. *Great fear came upon the whole church, and upon as many*

[e] 2 Cor. x. 4, 5. [f] Ver. 8. [g] Vid. S. Chrysostom. in loc. [hom. xiv. tom. x. p. 119.] [h] 1 Cor. iv. 21.

as heard these things, says St. Luke[i], when he relates how the other great apostle by this rod struck Ananias and Sapphira dead.

For "hereby they learnt two things," saith Asterius: "both that our Saviour was God, and that the teacher of his laws had angels attending him, who were ready to execute his pleasure. He would have the lame man walk, and presently that grace came. He thought good to punish these sacrilegious persons, and the punishment in an instant was inflicted. These things were sufficient to astonish the most stony hearts; and to persuade them firmly ὡς οὐκ ἀπάτης ἦν τὰ ῥήματα, that they were not words of deceit which the apostle spake, but that God was certainly with him, and that the mystery which he preached was true and holy[i]."

O the wonderful power of our Lord Christ, to whom all things in heaven and in earth and under the earth do bow and obey: whose ministers had so large an authority, that angels were ready to wait upon their word! Great is his power, which by such weak instruments brought such mighty things to pass. "His apostles, say the Gentiles, were men of no account, mean fishermen and such like rustic people. True: and we add moreover, that they were unlearned, illiterate, poor, vile, ignorant, and despicable. But this is no disparagement to them; it is their glory and peculiar praise that such men as these appeared more illustrious than the whole world. For these idiots, these rustics, these illiterate men were too hard for the wise, and overcame the mighty, and persuaded the rich and great to submit to their authority. Great therefore was the power of the cross; for these things were not done by any human strength. Consider a little. A fisherman, a tentmaker, a publican, an obscure illiterate man coming from Palestine, a far distant country, encounter with the philosophers at their own doors, with the rhetoricians, with the ablest speakers, and in a short time put them all down: though infinite dangers opposed them, and nature fought against them, and length of time and old customs mightily resisted them, and demons also armed themselves, and the devil mustered up his forces, and

[h] Acts v. 11.

[i] Encom. εἰς κορυφ. Ἀποστόλ. [Auct. Nov. Biblioth. Patr. Græco-Lat. per Combefim, tom. i. col. 133.]

moved all things: kings, rulers, people, nations, cities, barbarians, Grecians, philosophers, rhetoricians, sophisters, orators, laws, judgment-seats, all manner of punishments, a thousand sorts of deaths. But all these were no more able to stand before the breath of these poor fishermen than the small dust before the blast of powerful winds."

"How came it about that the weak thus overcame the strong? that twelve naked men not only encountered but vanquished those that were so well armed? If you should see twelve men unskilled in warlike affairs, and not only unarmed, but weak in body, attack an infinite host of well disciplined and well-appointed soldiers, and, receiving a thousand darts, should not be wounded, nor have any harm, but should take some of their opposers prisoners, and kill others, and disperse all; would any one think this was done by human means? And yet the trophies of the apostles are far more admirable. For it is not so strange for a naked man not to be wounded, as for an obscure, an illiterate person, a fisherman, to baffle so much wit and eloquence; and not to be hindered in their preaching neither by their own small number and poverty, nor by the dangers they met withal, nor by the prepossession of custom, nor by the austerity of things they commanded, nor by daily deaths, nor by the multitude of those that were in error, nor by the dignity of those that misled them[k]."

"Who would not admire that mouth of St. Paul by which Christ was preached; and a light broke forth more amazing than lightning, and a voice more terrible, even to devils, than any clap of thunder? This voice brought them bound like slaves, this purged the world, this cured diseases, and threw out wickedness, and introduced the truth. What good was there which was not done by that mouth of his? It drove away devils, it unloosed sins, it stopped the mouth of tyrants, it silenced the tongues of philosophers, it brought the world near to God, it persuaded barbarians to Christian wisdom, it set all things in order on earth, and had a power also in heaven; binding whom it would, and loosing there, according to the power given him[l]" . . . "As a lion let loose among a com-

[k] St. Chrysost. Hom. iii. in 1 Corinth. [tom. x. pp. 20, 1.]
[l] Id. Homil. ult. in Ep. ad Roman. [hom. xxxii. tom. ix. p. 758 B.]

pany of foxes, so did he fall upon the societies of demons and philosophers; and, like a thunderbolt, struck through all the armies of the devil; who was so afraid of him, that he trembled at his shadow, and ran away if he did but hear his voice. He delivered the incestuous Corinthian to him, being far distant from the place; and again he snatched him out of his hands, being perfectly acquainted with his devices. And in like manner he taught others, by the same severity, not to blaspheme.

"But let us not content ourselves merely to admire him; let us not only be astonished at him: let us imitate and follow him. What though we cannot do such miracles as the apostles did? and there is no hunger and other miseries to be endured? (the times being peaceable and quiet, God be blessed,) yet there is their piety and the holiness of their life to be transcribed, which was no less admirable. And this is the noblest conflict; this is the syllogism which cannot be contradicted; this by our works. Should we discourse never so excellently, but live no better than others; we gain nothing: for unbelievers do not mind what we say, but what we do; saying, Do thou first of all follow thine own words, and then persuade others. For if thou tellest us of millions of good things in the other world, but art so intent upon the things of this, as if there were no other; we believe thy works rather than thy words. For when we see thee greedy to snatch other men's goods, bitterly bewailing thy friends deceased, and in many other things offending, how shall we believe thee that there is a resurrection? Thus unbelievers are hindered from being Christians."

"And therefore having seen how glorious our Saviour is, being instructed in his religion, and made partakers of so great a gift, let us lead a life agreeable to our principles; that so we may enjoy those good things which Christ hath promised. For he therefore appeared, not only that his disciples might behold his glory in this world, as they say they did[m], but also in the world to come: for, *I will*, saith he, *that where I am, they may be, and see my glory*. And if he appeared so illustriously here, what shall we say of his glory there? O happy, thrice happy they, more happy than can be expressed,

[m] John i. 14.

who shall be thought worthy of that glory! Which if we should be so unhappy as not to see, better had it been for us if we never had been born. To what purpose do we live and breathe? what are we if we miss of that light? if we may not be permitted then to see our Lord and Master? If those who enjoy not the light of the sun lead a life more bitter than death, how miserable will their condition be who are deprived of that light! This loss will be punishment sufficient: though this is not all they must expect. For, being banished from this light, they shall not only be cast into outer darkness; but there burn perpetually and miserably consume, and gnash their teeth, and suffer a thousand other miseries.

"Let us awake therefore, let us look about us, let us use our utmost endeavours, that we may enjoy the happiness Christ designs for us; and be far remote from the river of fire, which runs with great noise before the dreadful tribunal. Into that if we fall there is no redemption. And therefore let us purify our life, let us make it bright and shining; so that we may have boldness of access to the blessed sight of our Lord, and obtain the promised good things, through the grace and loving-kindness of Christ Jesus: by whom and with whom to the Father and the Holy Ghost be glory world without end. Amen[n]."

CHAP. XIII.

The use we are to make of this Record.

I.

And in the very entrance of so pious a design, to improve the great grace which heaven hath bestowed on us, it becomes us to stand amazed at the transcendent love of God our Saviour: who, not contenting himself to have thoughts and intentions of good towards such wretched sinners, hath been pleased to make us a gracious promise that he will bless us; and to acquaint us, by no less messenger than his own eternal Son appearing from heaven in our flesh, with the secret purposes of

[n] Id. Homil. xii. in Johan. [tom. viii. pp. 70, 1.]

his heart to give us the greatest blessedness. There is nothing so astonishing as this; whether we consider the incomparable excellency of the good he designs us, or the favour he hath done us in revealing it to us, or the glory of that person by whom he reveals it, or the certainty we have that this is a true report, *that God hath given to us eternal life, and this life is in his Son.*

O most joyful news! shall we poor mortals live for ever? and live there where Jesus is? May such as we presume to expect such glory, honour and immortality, as he hath brought to light by his gospel? O wonderful love! which might have concealed its kindness, and yet eternally obliged us. It had been enough, if we had got to heaven, without knowing beforehand we should be so happy. Why should such offenders enjoy the comfort of hoping for so great a happiness, while we are here in these earthly prisons? Might we not have been well contented to creep upon our hands and knees to so high a glory? Had we not been fairly used, if with our heads hanging down, and not daring so much as to lift up our eyes to that holy place, we had travelled through this world, and at last found ourselves, beyond all expectation, at rest with Jesus? But, O the love of God, which hath bid us hold up our heads, and look above, and behold our Lord in his glory, and hope well, yea be confident, that he *hath seated us together in heavenly places in Christ Jesus!* We are indebted to him beyond all thoughts, for promising us so freely, out of his exceeding great love, and giving us so evident a right to such glory and honour, as our own unworthiness and guilt forbad us to promise ourselves, or to have the least expectance of.

And what is it that he hath so freely promised? To look into that high and holy place where he is! at some distance to behold his glory! to have an angel come sometimes to visit us, and bring us some message from him in some of the suburbs of heaven! And a great favour too, I assure you. A very singular kindness it ought to be esteemed, if we vile wretches may be permitted to be so happy as but to come near the gates of the celestial palace. Well would it be for us to come but within the sound of those melodious hymns which the heavenly host continually sing; or to live but in some of the most remote corners of that heavenly country; and there

enjoy, for many ages, the sweet society of some good friends, in pure love and innocent conversation. But hark! he tells us we shall live with him, and see his glory, and be with his Son Jesus, and reign together with him in his heavenly kingdom, and be equal to the angels, and enter into the joy of our Lord, and continue with him for ever! *What manner of love is this, that we should be called the sons of God; and being like him, behold him as he is!* Where is our love? whither is it run? after what is it wandered, if it be not here ready to acknowledge this kindness, in making us such *great*, such *exceeding great and precious promises?* Ah me! that we should have lost ourselves so much, as not to find our affections forward to meet such a love as this with the highest transport of joy! When our hearts so abound with love, that we have enough for every thing in the world, when there is not a pretty bird or a dog but we have some to spare for it, have we none at all for our Lord God, for Love itself, for that love which hath so loved us?

Ah blessed Jesus! that thou shouldst be pleased to do so much for those whose hearts thou knewest to be so cold, that they would scarce be warmed with the brightest beams of thine inconceivable love! How shall we excuse ourselves to thee that our souls are still so frozen, after thou, *the Sun of righteousness*, hast shone so long, so powerfully upon us?

Let us consider, are we fed with a mere fancy? do we live only in a pleasing dream? or are we left in doubt of the truth of these things, and hang in such suspense that we know not what to think of them? No such matter neither. He hath completed his kindness by giving us a certainty and full assurance of those things which are revealed to us in his gospel. Here are witnesses of the highest quality to attest the truth of his love: by whom *we know that the Son of God is come, and hath given us an understanding that we may know him that is true, &c. This is the true God, and eternal life.* And as if one or two were not sufficient, here are six witnesses come to tell us how he loves us. Heaven and earth conspire to draw our hearts to the love of him; who hath not only given us exceeding great promises, but exceeding great certainty that they are all true and faithful. He knew very well they would seem incredible; being as much beyond all our

thoughts as they are beyond our deserts. And therefore he took care to give us such evidences of their truth as should not merely work in us belief, but a full assurance of faith. By Himself, by his Word, by the Holy Ghost, by the Water, the Blood, and the Spirit, we are so many ways rooted and grounded in this persuasion, that we cannot but see we are doubly beholden to his infinite bounty: first, for such exceeding great and precious promises; and then, for as wonderfully great confirmation of them, to our unspeakable and endless comfort.

And are we not yet apprehensive of his love? Doth it not yet feelingly touch our hearts, but leave us indifferent whether we will love him or not? Ah, fools that we are! who must be sent to school to those brute creatures mentioned before, to teach us better nature and better manners. How do our very dogs (as I have said elsewhere) follow us and fawn upon us for a crust of bread! how close do they keep to us! how ready are they to defend us and our houses, and all belonging to us! Even when we are dead, some of them have been known not to forsake their masters for any other. And what is all this service for, but such things as we have no use of, or make no account of ourselves? O blessed God! who can endure to stay so long as to hear this applied to himself, before he learn to love thee? I see whither this lesson tends: I behold already how shameful it is to dispose of my heart away from thee. Thou hast given us thine own dear Son: what a gift! how great a boon! Thou hast promised us eternal life: how invaluable a possession! Thou hast given us good hopes and strong consolation: what an excessive kindness! Shall we not devote ourselves to thee? shall we not forsake all, and follow thee whithersoever thou wilt lead us? We cannot refuse: we must resolve to surrender our hearts entirely to thee. We should be worse than dogs, should we not with all our minds and soul and strength love that transcendent goodness, which by the most miraculous demonstrations hath persuaded us that we shall live eternally with himself, and enjoy the everlasting fruits of his infinite love. This is the most comfortable news that could possibly arrive from heaven. Should we have had our own wishes, nothing greater, nothing so great, could have entered into our hearts' desire. This sweetens the bitterness of

all afflictions, and this heightens all our joys; when we hope the one shall shortly, but the other shall never end.

Plutarch deservedly blamed Epicurus of great incogitancy, who, making all happiness consist in pleasure, denied the state of the future life; which it is the greatest pleasure to hope for and expect. Nothing casts such a damp upon all a man's enjoyments here, as the cold thoughts of an endless death seizing on his heart: he cannot but sigh to think that shortly there must be a final period put to all his delights; as, on the contrary, this gives life and spirit to them, if he can think they shall be improved and perpetuated for ever. And therefore how much do we owe to the love of God, who hath given us assurance even of the resurrection of our body to an immortal life, and told us it shall be so far from being lost by going to the grave, that, like seed, it shall rise again quite another thing than it was when cast into the ground; no longer weak, contemptible, corruptible, and mortal, but powerful, spiritual, glorious, incorruptible, and immortal; and consequently capable of purer, more sprightly, and more lasting pleasures than now it enjoys!

"O how much more comfortable is this opinion than that of the Epicurean (as Tertullian excellently speaks[a]), which vindicates thee from destruction! how much more seemly than the Pythagorean, which doth not send thee into beasts! how much more full than the Platonical, which restores even thy body as a new dowry to thee! *O taste and see how gracious the Lord is! Bonum Deum novimus; solum optimum a Christo ejus addiscimus*[b]: 'We knew God was good before; but so most excellently good, we learn only from his Christ;' who bidding us, next him, to love our neighbour, doth that himself which he expects from us. He loves even our body, which is so many ways of kin to him."

II.

But that we may understand how much we are indebted to him, and thereby become more sensible of his wonderful love, give me leave to show, as briefly as I can, how little the world knew, before our Saviour came, of this happiness which he hath revealed to us; and how much his loving-kindness hath abounded towards us more than to his more peculiar

[a] De Testimonio Animæ, c. iv. [p. 66 B.]

[b] Id. De Resurrectione Carnis, c. ix. [p. 331 A.]

people in former days, whose love notwithstanding he expected should be entirely devoted to him and his service.

It would be very easy to show, were there not danger of making this treatise too big, how weak all the reasonings of the philosophers were about this matter, and in what uncertainty they left men after they had written whole books on this subject. Among all those who endeavoured by human argumentations to find it, "there were but few (as St. Augustine truly observes[c]) that could, and they but scarcely, arrive at the knowledge of the immortality of the soul, though men of great wit, and abounding with leisure, and instructed in the most subtle pieces of learning. And when they had resolved," says he, "that it was immortal, they could not find a settled blessed life for it; but many of them thought it returned again to the miseries of this life: and they who blushed at this, and placed the soul in immortal blessedness without the body, destroyed their own opinion by the revolution which they fancied of all things back again, after a certain period of time, to that condition wherein they were before:" as he shows more fully in his book of the City of God[d]. There is nothing truer than that of St. Paul[e], that they *had no hope*, viz. of the resurrection and eternal life: for, to say nothing of the resurrection, (to which they were perfect strangers,) some of the greatest philosophers denied the immortality of the soul. Socrates himself, the very best of them, was not confident of it, but left it in doubt, as a thing uncertain. Nor was Aristotle more assured; no, nor Tully and Seneca; who could not by all their reasonings attain a sure and well-grounded hope of it, but were forced to confess, after all their disquisitions about the soul, that τῶν χαλεπωτάτων ἐστὶ λαβεῖν τινα πίστιν περὶ αὐτῆς[f], 'it is one of the most difficult things in the world to receive any belief or certain knowledge about it.' All that they said was conjecture, and very weak, very uncertain, and sometimes very extravagant; which shows in what a mist they were without the light of divine revelation, which we by God's great grace enjoy.

They themselves seem to be sensible sometimes of the want

[c] Lib. xiii. De Trinitate, c. 8 et 9. [tom. 8. col. 935 E.]
[d] Lib. xii. c. 20. [tom. vii. col. 320.]
[e] Eph. ii. 12.
[f] Aristoteles, lib. i. de Anima, c. 1. [§ 2.]

of an heavenly guide, to conduct them with more certainty to the knowledge of that happiness which they desired; as any one may see in Plato's Dialogues[g] on this subject: where Socrates his arguments for immortality, just before he was going to die, have so little force to conclude any thing certainly, that Simias had reason to say, it is either ἀδύνατον, ἢ παγχάλεπόν τι, 'impossible, or a thing extreme difficult,' to know any thing clearly of it in this life. 'But a man must choose the best reasons he can find, which are least liable to exception; and he must venture to embark himself in these, and sail by them through this life; unless he can be so happy as to be carried safer and with less hazard ἐπὶ βεβαιοτέρου ὀχήματος, ἢ λόγου θείου τινὸς, in a surer steadfast chariot,' of some divine word, that is, or revelation. Which is a plain acknowledgment that this only can give us perfect security, and satisfy us so as to take away all doubt. And this God hath granted to us Christians, to whom he hath spoken in these last days by his Son, and given this record of him, that eternal life is in him. And therefore Lactantius might truly say[h], *Immortales esse animas Pherecydes et Plato disputaverunt; hæc vero propria est in nostra religione doctrina:* 'Pherecydes and Plato disputed that souls were immortal; but it is our religion only that teaches this as its proper lesson: for to know what is true is in no man's power but his that is taught of God.' And their arguments, he shows in the next chapter, were so weak, and so much there was to be said with equal probability on the other side, that Tully, after all things weighed on both parts, concluded he knew not what to say but this, *Harum igitur sententiarum, quæ vera sit, Deus aliquis viderit*[i]; 'which of these opinions therefore are true, God only knows.' And in another place, 'Both these opinions have learned authors; but which is certain, cannot be divined[k].' In the next chapter also but one he brings another such uncertain resolution of the same great man; who says, 'We should go confidently to death, in which we know there is either the greatest good, or no evil[l].'

But what this *summum bonum*, 'greatest good,' was, they

[g] In Phædone. [cap. 35. p. 85 D.]
[h] Lib. vii. Divin. Instit. c. 7. [tom. i. p. 537.]
[i] [Tusc. Disc. i. 11. § 23.]
[k] [p. 540.]
[l] [p. 544. Tusc. Disc. i. 46. § 110.]

were still to seek. When they had supposed their souls to survive their bodies, they had no certain knowledge what the happiness of their future state should be, but miserably wandered in the darkness of their imaginations, as their several fancies led them. We need only take the fairest descriptions they have left us of the εὐσεβῶν χῶρος, 'country of the pious,' to satisfy us how little men could know, when they had only their own thoughts to direct them, of the state of the other world. Gobryas, in a dialogue ascribed to Plato[m], says, that "it is a region where the seasons of the year abound with all manner of fruit; the fountains gush out with the purest water; the fields are clothed with all kind of flowers; and where there are schools of philosophers, theatres of poets, music and dancing schools in perfection; together with the neatest banquets, all sorts of dainties springing up themselves, a sweet easy life without any mixture of sorrow or grief; for neither the winter nor summer are there in excess, but a well-tempered air, illustrated by the softest beams of the sun: and there they that are initiated in the mysteries have the preeminence, and rightly perform the holy offices." Which is not much different from the paradise which the disciples of Mahomet expect; who cannot raise their minds higher than the things they best fancy in this world: which makes them, being forbidden by their law the drinking wine here, to reckon this among the pleasures of the other world, that they shall have liberty there to drink as much as ever they will, and be in no danger of intoxication; for the wine of paradise, the Alcoran[n] says, doth not make men drunk, as ours doth, but passes away all by sweat, which smells as sweet as any musk.

Which I mention for no other end but to show how stupidly blind men are when they are left to walk in the ways of their own hearts; and how deeply we are indebted to the exceeding great love of God, who, when he saw the minds of men too weak to comprehend such things, and that they stood in need of a divine teacher (as Clemens Alexandrinus[o] speaks), was pleased in his infinite condescension to send one from the very place, his own dear Son from heaven, τῆς ἀγαθοῦ κτήσεως δι-

[m] In Axiocho, p. 371. edit. Seran.

[n] Miscell. D. Pocock. c. vii. p. 300.

[o] Lib. v. Stromat. p. 548. [p. 647. ed. Potter.] [Works, vol. i. p. 235.]

διδάσκαλός τε καὶ χορηγὸς, 'both the Teacher and the Giver of that possession of good, the secret holy token of that great Providence,' which took care, when men had lost themselves in vain imaginations, to lead them right by him, who is *the Way, the Truth, and the Life:* who hath made that certain which was dubious, and that plain to every body which was the hardest thing in the world to know before; and bids us lift up our minds to God himself, with whom he dwells, and to whom he will bring us, that we may rejoice in his love for ever in the happy company of angels and good men, and in that place of which the Divine Majesty is the glory.

And it was but needful, we shall see, he should send us such a Conductor, when we consider how little even they who were instructed by God himself understood of this eternal life before our Saviour appeared.

It cannot be denied that the greatest part of the Jews, before our Saviour's coming, did expect the resurrection of the dead and eternal life[p]. And their pious ancestors before the giving of the law[q], as well as after[r], sought an *heavenly country*, and had respect to the *recompence of reward*, and refused deliverance from their tortures, that they might obtain *a better resurrection.* And their writers in all ages have spoken much of the *world to come:* whereby they understand sometimes the days of the Messiah, and sometimes the future state which we expect after death. All this is true; but it is as certain,

I. That they had no such express promises of these things, either in the law or in the prophets, as we have in the holy gospel. Where do you read one such saying as this (which we frequently meet withal) in the whole law of Moses: *Verily, verily, I say unto you, he that believeth on me hath everlasting life. I am the living bread, which came down from heaven: if any man eat of this bread, he shall live for ever: and the bread that I will give is my flesh, which I will give for the life of the world*[s]*?* Promises indeed of the good things of this world are very rife to those that diligently keep God's commandments; to whom he says, *I will give you the rain of your land in due season, that thou mayest gather in thy corn, and thy wine, and thine oil. And I will send grass*

[p] John v. 39; Acts xxiv. 15. [q] Heb. xi. 9, 10, 16, 26. [r] Ver. 35.
[s] John vi. 47, 51.

in thy fields for thy cattle, that thou mayest eat and be full[t]. Which is repeated again more largely, Deut. xxviii. 2, 3, &c.: *And all these blessings shall come upon thee and overtake thee, if thou shalt hearken unto the voice of the Lord thy God. Blessed shalt thou be in the city, and blessed shalt thou be in the field. Blessed shalt thou be in the fruit of thy body, and the fruit of thy ground,* &c. *Blessed shall be thy basket and thy store. Blessed shalt thou be when thou comest in, and blessed shalt thou be when thou goest out.* But in what place do you find any such promises as these: *Blessed are the poor in spirit: for theirs is the kingdom of heaven. Blessed are they that mourn: for they shall be comforted. Blessed are the pure in heart: for they shall SEE GOD. Blessed are they that do his commandments, that they may have right to the tree of life:* with such like? of which the New Testament is so full, that a little time will not serve to number them all[x].

Alas! when their writers undertake to prove the life of the world to come out of their law, it is out of places so far from the purpose, that this endeavour is a plain confession they have no express promises of it, but are fain to squeeze the words to speak that which is not in them. Shall I give a few instances of this truth? Joseph Albo, a famous man of that nation, and of good reason, from that place[y], *Ye are the children of the Lord your God: ye shall not cut yourselves, nor make any baldness between your eyes for the dead: for thou art an holy people,* &c., thus fetches about his discourse. "Behold, one would think the quite contrary should be concluded. They should the rather mourn and grieve, because they are the children of God: as the son of a king is more to be lamented when he is dead, than the child of an ordinary man. But the true interpretation is as if he had said, Seeing the most blessed God is holy, and his ministers are holy; thou also art an holy people. All things are joined to that which is like themselves; and therefore without doubt your soul is joined to the angels, because it is holy as they are holy: for which cause you must not cut yourselves for the dead, nor mourn more than is fit. And this teaches us, that there is a

[t] Deut. xi. 14, 15. [x] Matt. v. 3, 4, 8. Rev. xxii. 14.
[y] Deut. xiv. 1, 2.

blessed immortality for the soul after death." Such is his conclusion from those words: which rather teach us how hard it is to find any thing in the law to that purpose; and how much we are bound to magnify the love of God for the revelation of his blessed will in the gospel. He argues something better when he gathers it from those words[z], where he saith there is a twofold happiness or reward spoken of; one spiritual, *it is your life*, the other corporal, because it is said, *through this ye shall prolong your days*. And yet, so weak and infirm are their reasonings, that at another turn they shall prove eternal life from this promise of *prolonging their days;* though it be expressly added, *in the land which the Lord thy God giveth thee*. For there being the letter Jod wanting in the word יַאַרִכוּן in the Fifth Commandment, where God promises to prolong their days, they conclude that there is no prolongation of days in this world, but it belongs to the next[a]. Nor can he find any clearer place to prove the resurrection of the body than that in the same book, *I kill, and I make alive*. Nay, our Lord himself alleges a place for it, which was but dark till he illustrated it, and proved, by consequence, not an express promise, that Abraham, Isaac, and Jacob should be rewarded by him who called himself their God.

But we cannot, I think, learn this truth better from any than from Philo, a man much excelling all the modern Jews; who could find no places to this purpose plainer than those cited by Albo; some of which he alleges, and adds others[b] no less weak and obscure. Such as that, *But ye that did cleave unto the Lord are alive every one of you this day*[c]. They that were good, says he, Moses only acknowledges for the living; and he witnesses to them immortality, by adding, ye are alive ἐν τῇ σήμερον, *this day*. For this *to-day* is the ἀπέραντος καὶ ἀδιεξίτητος αἰὼν, *world without end*. If he could have met with any plain promises, who can think that a man of his parts would have used such fanciful proofs as this? And yet this place, I find, R. Gamaliel most relied on, when, after a long dispute with the Sadducees, who would not be satisfied

[z] Deut. xxxii. 47.

[a] [The same cabbalistic interpretation of the passage is mentioned by Hackspan, in his Exposition of the Jewish Cabbala, chap. 135. p. 376.]

[b] In his book Περὶ φυγάδων. [tom. i. p. 554.]

[c] Deut. iv. 4.

that the resurrection could be proved out of the law, he at last referred them hither[d]. But he explained the words thus, As ye are all alive to-day, so you shall live also in the world to come. For he supposes some of those whom Moses speaks of were dead, and yet the text says they *were alive:* because their union with God, by cleaving to him, made them immortal. Which is not much better than the next proof which follows in Philo, who fancies that in Lev. x. 2, where it is said, *Nadab and Abilu died before the Lord*, τὰ σύμβολα τῆς ἀθανασίας ἄδεται, 'the tokens of their immortality is proclaimed.' And that to say they *died before the Lord*, is as good as to say they lived; for it was not lawful to bring a dead thing into the presence of God. And this, says he, is that which the Lord presently adds, *I will be sanctified of those who draw nigh to me:* for *the dead*, as it is in the Psalms, *praise not God; ζώντων τὸ ἔργον, it is the work of the living*[e]. Just thus he proves in another book[f], with the like force, that Abel lives τὴν ἐν Θεῷ ζωὴν εὐδαίμονα, 'an happy life in God,' because the Scripture saith the voice of his blood cried out against his wicked brother. Now πῶς ὁ μηκέτ' ὢν διαλέγεσθαι δυνατός; 'how could he be able to speak if he was not in being?' An argument which rather proves Moses spake nothing clearly of these things; for if he had, this writer would not have contented himself with such slender inferences. Which are as weak as that of R. Johanan, who proves the resurrection from that in Num. xviii. 28, where they are commanded to give the Lord's Terumah *to Aaron the priest:* who did not live, saith he, to enter into the land of Canaan; and therefore must be raised again to receive the portion of the Lord in that good land. And yet this argument is as strong as that of R. Solomon, who concludes it merely from the two Jods in the word יִיצֶר[g], where it is said, *the Lord God formed man*, &c. This signifies, says he, that man must be formed twice; once in this world, and once in the next at the resurrection of the dead. There are more of this nature in the Gemara of the Sanhedrin[h], which I shall not trouble the reader withal; but only

[d] Manasseh ben Israel, l. i. de Resurr. c. 1. [§ 8. p. 9.]

[e] [P. 555.]

[f] Περὶ τὸ τοῦ χείρονα, &c. p. 164. [tom. i. p. 200. ed. Mangey.]

[g] Gen. ii. 7.

[h] Vid. Coch. c. xi. n. 2, 3, 9. [Opp. tom. ix. p. 230 sqq.]

note, that the weakness and uncertainty of these proofs make the Samaritans brag of the advantage they have of the Jews; because, they say, in their Pentateuch, (which therefore they would have to be the true copy of Moses his law,) there is an express text to prove the resurrection and the life to come, which the Jews cannot show. So desirous were all that had the possession of these books to find these truths plainly recorded there; which even those words, which the Samaritans pretend to be a part of their law, do not contain. All is dark and doubtful after their best glosses and inferences; and we can conclude nothing certainly, but that God did not reveal these things to Moses, who was sent to make a covenant of another nature with the Israelites. Whence it was that they were so much disputed by a great party among the Jews, as every body knows; the Pharisees affirming, and the Sadducees denying: which left the minds of the multitude in much doubt while they saw these two schools so resolutely opposing one the other.

And if we pass from the law to the prophets, especially to the prophet Isaiah, who (as Abarbinel says in his preface to him) speaks more clearly of the resurrection of the dead than all the rest, we shall not receive much greater satisfaction. For the places from whence it is deduced do so evidently belong to another sense in the first intention of the prophet, that it forces us to confess this doctrine was but obscurely delivered in those days, and that we could not have been certain of any other sense without the benefit of a revelation. The proofs which Abarbinel[j] brings are, Isa. xviii. 4; xxiv. 18, 21, 22, 23; xxv. 8; xxvi. 19; lxvi. 8, 14, 24. and such like: which when we have seriously examined, it will excite us with the greater admiration to acknowledge the infinite grace of God towards us; who do not see these things through shadows, nor have need of long discourses to extract this heavenly doctrine out of our books, but in express terms read, *So God loved the world, that he gave his only-begotten Son, that whosoever believeth in him should not perish, but have everlasting life*[k]. *And this is the promise that he hath promised us, even eternal life*[l]. What is there in all the prophets like to this, *I am the resurrection, and*

[j] [Quoted in Sepher Cosri, part i. § 117. p. 73. ed. Buxtorf.]

[k] John iii. 16. [l] 1 John ii. 25.

the life: he that believeth in me, though he were dead, yet shall he live: and whosoever liveth and believeth in me shall never die[m]*?*' The clearest place is that in Daniel xii. 2. And yet, if we read the words going before, (not to say Mr. Brightman[n], Grotius[o], and other learned writers upon the place,) we shall not be able to deny that he is speaking of a particular resurrection, from exceeding great oppression, to a long state of prosperity. Which typified indeed, in a very admirable manner, (as Ezekiel's dry bones and many other things did,) the state of the general resurrection and eternal blessedness, but did not plainly reveal it. This was reserved for our Lord Jesus Christ, who *brought life and immortality to light by his gospel;* and openly proclaimed, that *all* (not *many*, as it is in Daniel,) *that are in their graves shall hear his voice, and shall come forth; they that have done good, unto the resurrection of life; and they that have done evil, unto the resurrection of damnation*[p].

II. But we shall see more reason to bless the infinite goodness of God towards us Christians, if we observe, as we may easily from what hath been said, that as they wanted the express promises which we have, so what they understood of the nature of this felicity, by the light they enjoyed, was but very dull in comparison with what is revealed to us: who can see more even in their books than they could do themselves, and find out that by the light of the gospel which was wrapt up in dark figures and clouds under the law and the prophets. As they saw Christ in Isaac and in a lamb, so they beheld heaven under the figure of Paradise, and in a *land flowing with milk and honey*, and in the holy city, and the temple of stone; the greatest glory whereof was, when it was filled with the cloud[q]. But now in the church of the New Testament there is no temple, *but the Lord God Almighty and the Lamb are the temple of it*[r]. And he saith not now, *I will dwell in thick darkness;* but, as it follows there, *the glory of God enlightens the church, and the Lamb is the light thereof*[s]: who hath made us *with open face* to *behold his glory* in the

[m] John xi. 25, 26.
[n] Ibid. [p. 941.] in Rev. xx. 11. [p. 832.]
[o] [Apud Critic. Sacr. in loc. col. 438.]
[p] John v. 28, 29.
[q] 1 Kings viii. 10, &c.
[r] Rev. xxi. 22.
[s] Ver. 23.

heavens; and given us full assurance that *we shall be changed into the same image, from glory to glory*[s]. This he published so clearly, that the dullest and most illiterate souls saw there was no master comparable to him, who had *the words of eternal life;* and by his death, resurrection, and ascension, opened to all believers the kingdom of heaven. That is a word St. Austin confesses[t] he could not find in all the old Scriptures; and St. Hierome says the same. There are testimonies there, saith he, of eternal life, whether plain or obscure it matters not: (though the places he alleges would have been obscure, if we had not been enlightened before we read them by the gospel:) "but this name of the kingdom of heaven I can meet withal in no place:" *hoc enim proprie pertinet ad revelationem Novi Testamenti,* 'for it properly belongs to the revelation of the New Testament.' And it is a word, as the author of the answers *ad Orthodoxos* teaches us[u], which doth not simply signify the resurrection, ἀλλὰ *μετὰ τὴν ἀνάστασιν ἀποκατάστασιν,* 'but the state of things after the resurrection,' when we shall be so marvellously changed, as to be fit companions for the angels, and reign with our Saviour in his glory.

Of which things the Jews have now so little knowledge, that they expect only to rise again to feast here upon earth with the Messiah whom they look for; and after they have spent some years in the enjoyment of the good things of an earthly paradise, then they think their bodies shall die, and their souls only live for ever[x]. Let any one that is able but read what Manasseh ben Israel hath writ of the resurrection, and he will find it such poor stuff, that the best use that can be made of it will be, to put ourselves in mind how much we stand engaged to the divine love, for acquainting us so plainly with the happiness he will give us at the resurrection of our bodies to an immortal life. Our Saviour indeed saith, they might have learnt better out of the Scriptures, than to imagine there will be eating and drinking and marrying after the resurrection; but there was none of their books could teach them that we

[s] 2 Cor. iii. 18.

[t] L. xix. contra Faust. Man. cap. ult. [tom. viii. col. 332 E.]

[u] [Inter opp. Just. Mart. quæst. cxx. p. 492 E.]

[x] Vid. Jacchiades [R. Joseph ben Jacchia] in Dan. viii. 14. et L'Empereur ib. [p. 156. 4to. Amst. 1633.]

should be companions of angels, and shine like the sun, and see God, and be co-heirs with Christ, and such like things; which by the gospel are now so clearly discovered to us, that the most ignorant know more than the wisest that want this revelation.

R. Tanchum (who would fain prove the life of the world to come from the words of Abigail, who speaks of the binding David's soul *in the bundle of life*, 1 Sam. xxv. 29[y].) observes, that this mystery, which was a stranger to men's understandings in other nations, and far remote from their thoughts, to the knowledge of which none but very wise men came, by much labour and exercise, and after long disquisitions and difficult reasonings, was known then among the Jews, and manifest even to the women. An argument, saith he, that wisdom was much spread in our nation, and that, as Moses speaks, *we are a wise and understanding people*[z]. Which is far truer of the disciples of the Lord Jesus; among whom even the most simple are taught such things, as (whatsoever such a wise woman as Abigail may be supposed to understand in ancient days) their greatest doctors have been so ignorant of since, that we see the words of Isaiah fulfilled in them, *The wisdom of their wise men shall perish, and the understanding of their prudent men shall be hid*[a]. *Where is the wise?* (as St. Paul triumphs over them,) *where is the scribe? where is the disputer of this world? God hath chosen the foolish things of the world to confound the wise*[b]: made use, I mean, of such men as the world, for want of human learning, accounted no better than fools, to publish so clearly and with such evidence the doctrine of eternal life, that it may justly make men of the greatest repute for learning blush, who could not speak one wise word about it.

But suppose them all to have been endued with a clearer sight than indeed they had of the life to come, yet of the blessedness which God intends for us there, that of St. Paul will still be true; *Eye hath not seen, nor ear heard, neither have entered into the heart of man the things which God hath prepared for them that love him*[c]. There is a passage in the

[y] D. Pocock. Not. Miscell. c. vi. p. 91. [Works, vol. i. p. 161.]
[z] Deut. iv. 6.
[a] Isaiah xxix. 14.
[b] 1 Cor. i. 20, 27.
[c] 1 Cor. ii. 9.

prophet Isaiah very like this[d], which the Jewish doctors themselves expound, in the mystical sense, of the future life; and from thence St. Paul is supposed to have borrowed these expressions. Though the very words themselves of St. Paul being found in the Apocryphal book of Elias[e], it is probable, as Grotius[f] thinks, that this was grown a common saying among the rabbins; who had been taught, by ancient tradition, to expect such things in the days of the Messiah, as never any eye had seen, nor ear heard, nor had entered into any man's heart to conceive. Which is verified in the whole revelation of God's will in the gospel; especially in this part of it. No man had so much as a thought or a desire of such things as God hath done for us, and intends to do by our Lord Jesus. That he should send from heaven his own Son, his only-begotten Son, begotten of him before all worlds, to be incarnate of a pure virgin, to die for our sins, that he might rise again to sit at God's right hand, where our nature shines far brighter than all the glorious host of heaven, are such things as they had no imagination of who expected the coming of Christ. Much less did they think of being so promoted by him in his heavenly kingdom, that they should at last arrive at the same glory; and this clod of earth should be lifted up to the dwellings of angels, and there be fashioned like unto the glorious body of Christ himself. These are things, as St. Austin, you heard, said before, which are "proper to the revelation of the gospel;" wherein we read this unheard-of love so plainly, that every child may understand it. But without this revelation, even they that have got the words sink into the dullest and most gross apprehensions of the future state. The Mahometans use these very words to express the felicity they expect in their paradise; saying, "God hath prepared for his servants such things as eye hath not seen, nor the ear heard, nor have come up into the heart of man[g]." But they mean only (as they themselves explain it) virgins with fairer and larger eyes than

[d] Isaiah lxiv. 4.

[e] [Orig. in Matt. xxvii. 9. tom. iii. p. 916 B; Hieron. ad Pammach. Epist. lvii. tom. i. col. 312 C; Zach. Chrysop. Harmon. Evang. lib. vi. in Max. Bibl. Vet. Patr. tom. xix. p. 937. referred to by Fabricius, Cod. Pseudepigr. Vet. Test. tom. i. p. 1072.]

[f] [Critic. Sacr. in loc. col. 963.]

[g] D. Pocock, not. ad Gregor. Abul-Pharaj. [p. 292.]

ever they beheld in this world, and such like things which I am ashamed to name: beyond which these blockish vicious Arabians were not able to lift their minds. They are the words of Maimonides upon this occasion, who talks more rationally, I showed in the beginning of this treatise, than many of his brethren; in whom we find conceptions of the state of the other life little less sensual than those of Mahomet.

Blessed be God therefore, should we say, who hath *revealed* these unseen, unheard-of, inconceivable things *to his apostles by his Spirit;* and made us understand *what is the hope of his calling, and what the riches of the glory of his inheritance in the saints.* We can never thank him enough, who hath *delivered us from the power of darkness, and translated us into the kingdom of the Son of his love.* By whom we understand that *flesh and blood cannot inherit the kingdom of God;* but *we shall be changed,* and made *spiritual* and *heavenly,* after the image of him who is *the Lord from heaven.*

III. And we are bound to the love of God above all other men in another regard also; because he hath given us such *records,* such *witnesses* of this eternal life; far greater than ever the world had seen or heard of before.

When men saw Abel, that first-fruit of righteousness, (as Theodoret calls him,) hastily plucked by the hand of violence before it was ripe; and his murderous brother Cain survive, and take root, and build cities; there was great danger that men should be tempted to think it was in vain to serve God faithfully, there being as yet no hope of the resurrection to comfort men's souls. And therefore God was pleased for this reason, as Theodoret thinks [h], to translate Enoch, a man whose piety exceedingly pleased him, to the other world, *εἰς ψυχαγωγίαν τῶν τῆς ἀρετῆς ἀθλητῶν,* 'that he might comfort the hearts of those who resolutely opposed vice, and contended for virtue,' in a wicked age. And this was apt to revive in all men's minds a belief of his providence, and persuade them that piety never went unrewarded; but that he who thus honoured Enoch, had taken care to recompense righteous Abel. Such was the grace of God to men before the *law.* And afterward, when the

[h] Quæst. xlv. in Genesin. [tom. i. p. 57.]

Israelites were greatly degenerate, and fallen into idolatry, Elias their prophet was carried in a chariot of fire by a whirlwind into heaven. These things were mighty encouragements to good men, and were apt to confirm all in the belief of a future life. But who is there whose name stands upon record to testify that he saw Enoch snatched from this mortal life, and taken up to God? And of Elias his transportation, what witness is there more than one, till our Saviour's time; when three of his apostles beheld him and Moses too (which was more than they knew of) appear in glory? Whereas we have no less than six witnesses, three in heaven and three on earth, who many ways testify to us that *Jesus is gone into heaven, and* (which is more) *is on the right hand of God, angels and authorities and powers being made subject unto him*[i]. All his apostles likewise saw him ascend thither, and he hath appeared to more than one of them since his supereminent exaltation. What a vast difference hath his goodness made between us and former times? They beheld something of the life to come in Enoch, *justorum translationem præmonstrans*, (as Irenæus speaks[k],) 'who foreshowed the translation of the just:' but we see it clearly in the *Son of God*, who hath promised to take us up to himself. They saw a few beams of this glory in the face of Moses, which shone on them when he came down from the mount: but we in the face of Jesus Christ; who, all the time he was among men, shone in such illustrious works, that they *beheld his glory, the glory as of the only-begotten of the Father;* and after he ascended to heaven, appeared several times from thence *in a light above the brightness of the sun at midday*. What a vast difference is there between our times and theirs? Ἔτι γὰρ ἐν σκιαῖς ἦν ἡ πίστις· 'for faith then was in shadows,' (as St. Greg. Nazianzen speaks[l] of Enoch's translation,) and they had not the things themselves clearly revealed to them; as we have by the grace of the gospel, which, when it appeared, was so bright and full of glory, that it scattered, nay consumed, as the other Gregory speaks[m], πᾶσαν τοῦ τύπου τὴν σκιοειδῆ φαντασίαν, 'all that duskish umbratic representation

[i] 1 Pet. iii. 22.

[k] Lib. v. cap. 5. [part. i. p. 298.]

[l] Orat. xx. p. 366. [ed. Ben. orat. xliii. § 70. tom. i. p. 825 B.]

[m] Gregor. Nyssen. Hom. v. in Cantic. [tom. i. p. 542 D.]

in types and figures;' and enlightened all places with the beams of that true light of life and immortality.

And more than this; there is not the least evidence, no syllable of any record which testifies that any of these persons had *life in themselves,* to give to their friends, or so much as help them forward to eternal life. No; nor do they say that others who fear God shall have the same felicity to which they were carried; though their very going thither put pious men in hope of being happy with them in heaven. Whereas we have abundant testimony in so many words, that *Jesus hath life in himself,* and is *the resurrection and the life:* that we shall *live by him,* and *with him;* that *none shall perish* who believe on him, nor any be able to *pluck them out of his hands;* that *he* himself *will raise them up at the last day, and give unto them eternal life*[n].

Then indeed, in those old times, was the infancy of the world; and being little children, (though they were heirs yet) they differed not much from servants. They knew not what their Father intended for them, nor understood the inheritance to which they were born: no more than a child does what the enjoyments of a man are, till he come to that estate. Unto that growth we are now arrived, who have the knowledge of God's grace in Christ Jesus. We are now the sons of God: and though it do not appear (as I said before) how we shall be his sons hereafter; yet this we know, that we shall be *like him* when he appears, for we *shall see him as he is.* And therefore we cannot refrain from crying out again, *Behold what manner of love the Father hath bestowed upon us!* Let us admire it, let us adore it; for never was there such love.

III.

But it is not sufficient only to admire this incomparably transcendent love, which naturally excites in the hearts of those that consider it such an ardent reciprocal affection as leads them to an universal cheerful obedience to God's will. That is the proof our Saviour justly expects of our unfeigned love to him. He would have us, if we be truly sensible of the kindness he hath done us, not *labour* so much *for the meat that perish-*

[n] John v. 26; vi. 57; x. 28; xi. 25; vi. 40, 44, 54.

eth, as *for the meat that endureth unto everlasting life, which he will give unto us.* Take any pains, that is, to be so happy as he designs to make us: which no man can refuse who hath once *set* his *affections*, not *on things* beneath, but on those *which are above, where Christ sitteth on the right hand of God.* And this he may well expect we will do, now that he hath so clearly demonstrated where our happiness lies, and given us such assurance that he lives for ever to bring us to it. This will move us, if any thing in the world can do it, to come when he invites us, to take his yoke upon us, and stoop to his burden; so shall we find rest to our souls. This *eternal life*, as the divine record tells us, is only *in the Son of God:* part of the meaning of which words is, that only by the religion which our Lord Jesus hath taught us is this great good to be obtained. This is testified to us by God as much as any thing else, that there is no way to be happy but by his Son Jesus; who hath shown us the only means to obtain glory, honour and immortality, is by *patient continuance in well doing.* True virtue is the preparation for it, without which nothing is good for us; neither health, nor riches, nor beauty, nor strength, nor power, no, nor immortality, (as Plato excellently discourses [o],) should we suppose it added to all these; but it is best that an evil man ὡς ὀλίγιστον χρόνον ἐπιζῴη, 'should live as little a while as may be.'

Which demonstrates again the incomparable love of God, in revealing those things to us which are so necessary for the securing and promoting our present happiness in this world: where, as we could not be safe without the belief of a life to come; so this alone is sufficient to make the whole world most happy, if it were deeply planted in it. We are infinitely therefore indebted to the almighty goodness for making this so certain. For this world would be a place full of nothing but confusion, disorder and mischief, were not the evil inclinations of men overruled by a belief of something to follow in another life. This restrains them from those outrages which their power many times enables them to commit with impunity while they are here. Their bold and violent spirits are checked and curbed, whensoever they think there is a greater Lord than

[o] L. ii. de Legibus. [p. 661 c.]

they, who will call them to an account. "Blessed be God therefore, we have all reason to say, who hath so evidently demonstrated there is a life to come after we go from hence; and, by the resurrection of Christ Jesus from the dead, assured us he hath appointed a day wherein he will judge the world in righteousness. This belief not only restrains men from doing evil, but, which is much more, will even force them to do well. It alone is sufficient, as I said, to make the world happy, did we thoroughly entertain it. Let a man but believe steadfastly there is a life to come in another world, and you need not instruct him how to behave himself here. That one principle will teach him to make an exact difference between good and evil: and awaken his soul to attend to those directions which he finds there for the regulating his actions towards God and man. And this it doth with such a force, that as a man cannot be ignorant, if he think of this, what he ought to do on all occasions; so neither his natural propension to sin, nor his evil customs, nor corrupt doctrines, nor the common received fashions among men, nor meanness of parts, nor multitude of business, nor the conceived difficulty of religion, will be able to hinder that man from doing as he ought, whose breast is possessed with the thoughts of immortal life. Neither nobility nor meanness of birth, riches nor poverty of estate, freedom nor servitude of condition, thirst of glory nor fear of contempt, the praise of some nor the scorn of others, the company of our equals nor the command of superiors, no gain, no loss, nothing that we desire, nothing that we dread, can stand before the force of this single argument, if it be settled in the heart. For the love of life itself, which is the first of all goods that we receive, and the last of all that we lose, is overcome by this, and submits to the disposal of this eternity of life. So that this is an universal medicine to purge us of all vicious humours, to strengthen and fortify our nature, and to revive and comfort the most languishing and fainting spirits. It is an engine strong enough to remove the most ponderous impediments that lie in our way; an unanswerable reason for any duty: and such a demonstration, as not only perfectly satisfies our mind, but, being once seated there, will never go out again.

The truth of this will be apparent to those that consider,

1. That this motive alone contains all other whatsoever in

it; there being more in these two words, ETERNAL LIFE, than *kingdoms*, and *thrones*, and *treasures*, and *glory*, and *joy*, and a thousand such like words can express. By which we may judge what force there is in that to make us do well, in which the strength of all other arguments, from greatness, honour, riches, pleasure, to engage our affections, are concentred and united. There is as vast a difference therefore between this and all other persuasives to the will, as between the beams of the sun when they are gathered in a glass, which set all combustibles that approach them on fire, and the same beams scattered and dispersed in the air, when they work only by their single virtue. By reason of which excellency it is that it meets with every man's desires, and hath something in it agreeable to his hopes. And to every one of those men of different desires it presents also every thing; so that the ambitious, for example, hath the greatest glory and honour set before his eyes to invite him to it, with the addition of pleasure, joy, peace, and all other desirable goods: whereby it breaks the force of all temptations which would divert us from piety; or rather heightens and lifts up our minds above them, as things inconsiderable: for a man's spirit being naturally formed into a likeness of the objects with which he is conversant, his mind who hath his thoughts in heaven necessarily becomes great and heavenly, and is inspired with such a generous and divine sense, that he is not moved with the solicitations of these little things here, but overlooks them all, as much below him: he is made sublime and truly noble by frequent conversation with so great a good, and scorns to stoop to the lure of those temptations which have such power upon earthly souls.

2. For such is the force of this motive, it is manifest from hence, that (as I discoursed in the beginning) it speaks to the whole man, and leaves no part of him untouched and unsatisfied. The understanding cannot say it is not satisfied with seeing, nor the will that it is not satisfied with loving, nor the affections that they are not filled with joy, nor any part of man complain that it wants a share in this eternal life; for even the body, we saw, shall partake of the glory that shall be revealed, and be much improved in strength, and beauty, and agility, and durableness, being made incorruptible: so that while other

petty goods do only still the craving of one desire (and that but for a little time), leaving the rest discontented, this entirely and at once quiets all, and brings in an universal fulness, being the very life of God himself. It is desirable therefore upon its own account, and for itself alone; there being nothing beyond it (as there is in other goods) for which we should desire it. We intend by the gaining of any thing here to come to the possession of some other good: but it is not so in our desires of eternal life; which being the last and chiefest good, our thoughts naturally rest and repose themselves when they come there, and seek no further: there our hearts settle, and no longer rove up and down in uncertainty after every thing we fancy; for the hope of it gives us a full contentment within ourselves, and thereby preserves us from a needless pursuit of this and the other enjoyment, and leaves us little else to do but to secure the inheritance of so great a blessedness.

3. And that we cannot miss, if we keep it in our thoughts; for so great is the efficacy of this good, that it cannot be refused. It is not in our power to set it at nought (as we may do other things, which have something greater than themselves to be their competitors in our affections); because it is a good so excellent, that there is none above it, or equal to it: it will not let us so much therefore as deliberate (when we attend to it) whether we will have it or no, but forces itself upon us on any terms or conditions whatsoever. And can there be a greater motive to do well than this; which not only baffles all temptations, and quiets the heart, so that it need not gad abroad after every little thing in this world, but also quite takes away all liberty to reject it, and leaves us no power to choose whether or no we will embrace it? Answer me in your own thoughts. What is there more persuasive than that which we can have no will at all, if we mind it, to deny? Such is the condition of *eternal life*, which inclines the will just as a talent doth the scales when there is nothing but air in the contrary balance, without any the least hovering or deliberation which way to turn; and were it alway present tous, it would wholly deprive us of all our liberty to do otherwise than it would have us. By reason indeed of its being in expectation hereafter, and that it becomes sensible to us now only by serious thoughts, a strong and lively faith, and by the power of the Holy Ghost,

the will of man retains a liberty (which while this good is before him he is quite despoiled of), whereby he too often chooses other things before this eternal life. But were it not for this, he could not choose but embrace it entirely; which sufficiently manifests the force of it in its own nature, if we will but be at the pains, by consideration, faith, and prayer for the Holy Spirit of God, to bring it into frequent view, and set it before us. And what is there imaginable of greater efficacy to move us to such constant diligence to bring it near to our hearts than this, that, when we see it, our wills have no power to be indifferent either to it or the well-doing which leads unto it? Nay, I may add this; So great is the force of this argument, that, though only the absence of it some time from our thoughts can make it possible we should perish, yet the will, being mightily affected with its presence, doth not only love it, but lays its commands upon the mind also to inquire and advise more seriously about the way to attain it at last, by preserving a constant sense of it at present. It hath no list to part with so great a good, and therefore excites the understanding to find out the means to keep and maintain a lively apprehension of it, and requires it to be careful and diligent in the continual use of those means.

4. And truly it is such a good (by which also you may judge how forcible a motive it is) as makes all means whatsoever whereby we may attain it lovely and desirable. There is no rule more known than this, that the end we design prevails with us to love those means which we would not love for themselves; as the hope of having our health restored makes bitter pills and distasteful potions go down well enough. But what is there, except perhaps the desire of saving our lives, which will render every thing whatsoever acceptable? It is the privilege of this good alone to dispose a man to refuse nothing, no, not death itself, that he may enjoy it: it commands over all the evil things in this world, as well as over the good; and makes a man willing to endure the one, as well as turn away from the invitation of the other: it makes the greatest ends a man hath in this world to submit to serve as means to bring us to it. And what will you imagine of greater virtue than that which will be received by all means? Suppose a man should be content to lose his pleasures and recreations, and health too, for

the getting riches, which is all he aims at while he lives; but see here a good which will make him willing to lose them too for so glorious a purchase. Or suppose a man will choose to lose all his worldly goods which he hath got, that he may preserve his liberty, and not be enslaved; here is a greater good still, which will dispose a man to kiss his cords or his chains, and sing, like Paul and Silas, in the innermost prison. Or suppose again, that to save his life a man should embrace the chains and fetters which tie him fast to his oar; here is something still beyond this, which is the only thing that can make a man cheerfully sacrifice his life, for the loss of which nothing else can make him any recompense. The reason is, because there is no proportion between this and all other things, either as to greatness or goodness, not so much as between a kingdom and a barleycorn.

And therefore, I may add, that it will make us in love with all piety at once; and with all the means leading to it, though never so troublesome. It doth not work upon us after the way of art, but as nature itself doth. It doth not teach us virtue and godliness by little parcels, as a statuary first forms one part of his statue, and then another; now working on the face, and then on the hands or feet; but instils it altogether in the whole mass, (as I may so speak,) and works in us such an universal love to goodness, as to have a ready will presently to do whatsoever God would have us. Just as you see the spirit of nature or a particular soul work in the formation of the body of a plant, or of an animal in the womb; which it begins in all its proportions together, and so proceeds on still to bring the parts to a greater bigness and strength: even so doth this mighty good operate when it touches the heart, not inclining it first to the grace of temperance, and then by another touch to the grace of charity, and after that by a third to the grace of contentedness, &c., but at once begets an hearty love to universal goodness, and forms the whole body of Christian virtues all together; which grow up after the same manner all alike, there being the same power inspiring us unto all. Which may spare me the labour of showing what a motive it is to inforce the practice of every particular virtue: which it makes easy also, because this one thing, which is the reason for all, is easily kept in our mind. *Eternal life* is like a short sentence, which

contains in it the pith and strength of a long discourse: or like unto a little leaven, which infuses itself into the whole mass wherewith it is mixed. And it makes all divine graces entire and perfect also. For where the mind is once impregnated with it, and it hath begun a divine life there, it will never produce a monstrous birth. No limb of the new man, if I may so speak, shall here be wanting. It will not suffer us, I mean, to be defective in any part of true piety; nor shall one part draw all the nourishment to it, and overgrow the rest. It will not let us spend our zeal about some particulars while we are cold and remiss in other Christian duties, but make us equally affected and spirited unto all. From whence likewise arises another benefit; that while, by the thoughts of this, we excite ourselves to any one grace, we promote our growth also in every one. When we stir up ourselves to the practice of our present duty, we are disposed thereby to the like cheerful obedience on any other emergent occasion. When we call up our souls by this to do God's will, it empowers us also (though we should not then think of it) to suffer what he would have us. And while we animate ourselves hereby to suffer one thing, it enables us to do and suffer all.

O the power of this divine good, if it once seat itself in the very throne of our hearts! How it makes them beat with the love of God, and with the love of our neighbour! How it inspires us with resolution, with confidence, with zeal, with joy, with all other pious affections! It will let us scruple none of God's commands, because it is of equal force to make us submit to all. Neither profaneness nor hypocrisy, neither listlessness nor despondency, can ever lodge in that heart where this belief is deeply rooted; that God will give to our little short labours here an immense eternal recompense in the other world.

6. One cannot imagine how it should be otherwise, if we go on to consider once more how naturally this belief fills our hearts with love to that blessed God, who is so good as to design us such inconceivable blessedness; and to his will, as the only way and means to be partaker of it. We shall easily be persuaded that the will of him who promises us immortality must needs be the rule of goodness. It will never enter into our hearts to suspect, that he who loves us so much can enjoin

us any thing but what is truly good for us. And so our wills and affections will readily bow and stoop to his without any dispute at all about it.

But I have said too much already about this business to have any room left for a new argument of the power of this great good.

IV.

Let us proceed rather to consider what the matter is, that a motive in itself so great and so powerful should have so little power upon men's hearts to move them to virtue and goodness. One may justly wonder at it, and ask, What is the cause that men are so dull, so sluggish, so backward to do well, since the reward is so certain, so transcendent; and it is as certain they will miss of it in any other way but this of virtue and piety? Where is the *violence* which the holy Gospel speaks of, and which, in all reason, was to be expected when the kingdom of heaven was opened? One would have thought, upon the report of so great a blessedness, men would have thronged into heaven, and with eager violence striven to thrust in themselves before others into such preferment as was offered them in our Saviour's kingdom. His disciples, sure, thought that men could not choose when they heard such news, but all flock to his fold, and prepare themselves to receive his blessing. And there have been those[p] who have fancied the apostles were so possessed with these thoughts, that this was the reason they were troubled to hear our Saviour say, *whither he went, they could not go*[q]; that is, at present: because they imagined all would run so thick towards the bliss which he promised, that if they went not to heaven with him then, it was to be questioned whether there would be any room left for them, and all places might not be taken up before they came. And to comfort them, our Saviour, say they, bid them *not be troubled, for in his Father's house were many mansions*[r]; that is, there was room for all comers, though never such multitudes. The discourse indeed of our Saviour there shows that this is but a fancy: yet if we consider the haste men make in any other advantageous offers, and how they will strive to prevent and circumvent one another, to gain any preferment here in this

[p] Maldonate and de Celada. [q] John xiii. 33. [r] xiv. 1, 2.

world, they might well think that men would come in as great crowds to heaven as we have seen them sometime come to church; and would all run as men do in a race, contending earnestly who should carry away the crown. For *bonorum quorundam, sicut et malorum, est intolerabilis magnitudo,* 'the greatness of some goods, as well as of some evils, is so excessive and intolerable.' (as Tertullian[s], if I forget not, somewhere speaks,) that it weighs down all that can be cast into the scale against it, and suffers not our wills, as you have heard, to deliberate about it. Whence is it then that we see so little care and concern about that *far more exceeding eternal weight of glory?* that good which is so vast, that in this state we cannot bear the very thoughts of it? Instead of that forwardness which might have been expected, there is a strange backwardness so much as to think of these things. A prodigious numbness and stupidity hath seized on the hearts of Christian people, who seem to have no life at all in them. To what shall we impute it, seeing the Sun of righteousness hath shone so brightly and strongly on them with these cheerful beams of eternal life, which he hath brought to light through his gospel?

Is there any thing here that can pretend to vie with the *eternal life* he hath revealed? I will not stay for an answer, the disparity is so great between this and all other goods. What is it then which makes men so indifferent? Is there little or no hope that God will bestow such great and glorious things upon such vile wretches as we are? No, he hath *promised* and *prepared* them, as you have heard, and he cannot be worse than his word, nor lose all his own preparations. What is it then that stifles their endeavours after this immortal bliss? Will he not give it but upon very hard terms, and such rigorous conditions as are enough to freeze the warmest resolutions when we think of them? Not this neither: for he hath prepared these good things *for those that love him*[t]. And what is there more easy, what more pleasant and cheerful than love? especially of the first chiefest good? which will certainly make all our duty as easy and delightful as itself is. Or will you say, that we cannot love him: it is an impossible condition? For shame, consider, that the very offer of

[s] [De Patientia, cap. 1. p. 140 A.] [t] [1 Cor. ii. 9.]

such glorious things is enough to make us love him entirely, if we did believe them. Were we persuaded that he will bestow upon good men such happiness with himself, so great, so long; it would inflame our hearts with the most ardent passion towards his service. Therefore I have already named the true cause of all men's coldness and sloth. After all our search we shall find it nothing else but this, They do not believe. They are not persuaded of the certainty of the rewards in the other world, or have not fixed this belief in their minds: for if they had, it would not easily slip out again. They are moved strongly by what they see with their eyes, and feel with their hands, and taste with their tongues; but faith hath little or no place or power in their hearts. This is proved to be too true by the lives of men; which are so base and unworthy, as if they did not hope for the happiness of a fly in the other world.

Therefore every one of our business must be to awaken that faith in our souls which we profess, that divine principle which is of such force as to *overcome the world*[u]. For it is manifestly true which the apostle writes, that *without faith it is impossible to please God*. We shall never do any thing worthy of him, unless we *believe that God is, and that he is the rewarder of them that diligently seek him*[v]: as, on the contrary, it is no less manifest, that if we do believe, we shall not only please him, but we shall please ourselves in doing so, and find it most delightful to be religious. It will marvellously enliven us, and infuse, as it were, a new spirit and soul into us; so that we shall differ as much from ourselves as the corn doth when it is sown in the ground and when it shoots up again in all its verdure and beauty. It will make us adorn ourselves, I mean, with all the fruits of righteousness, and beget in us such a spiritual life as will fructify and increase in all good works.

And here consider, first, that the things themselves propounded to our belief are such as we cannot but desire it should be true that God intends to bestow them on us. Who is there that would not willingly live for ever, that doth not think immortality the greatest prerogative of human nature; provided we may live always in joy and pleasure, in uninterrupted contentments and never-fading delights? Though they

[u] [1 John v. 4.] [v] [Hebr. xi. 6.]

should be less than our Lord hath promised, there is no heart but above all things wishes to be so happy. To see only the beautiful orders of the heavenly hosts, the glorious company of the apostles, the goodly society of the prophets, the noble army of martyrs, the venerable quire of pastors, the whole multitude of holy men and women, who celebrate a perpetual feast of joy; to live in happy friendship with them, to love them, and to be beloved of them; to bear a part in their eternal song of praise and thanks to God; how desirable is it above any thing that we can fancy in this world! No man hath so little love to himself as not to wish he might be numbered among those saints in glory everlasting. It is impossible we should not be pleased with the thoughts of having a consortship in such an incomparable happiness, were we but persuaded that it is not a dream, but a real truth. There needs nothing more to bring it into all men's favour but only to be satisfied that there is such an happiness.

And that is the other thing I would propound to your thoughts; that as we naturally desire such an happiness, so, if we consider the evident demonstrations we have of it in the gospel, this and a great deal more appears to be the undoubted inheritance of all good souls, who shall *see God*, and *be with our Lord*, and *behold his glory*. Which wonderfully recommends the Christian religion to us; wherein we are gratified in our most important desires, and have those things made sure and certain to us which we would all fain have for our portion. For what is the general intent of the gospel but to discover to mankind immortal life, and the way to it? This was the great end of our Saviour's appearing, who brought that glimmering light that was in men's minds of the other world to a more perfect day. And upon this errand the apostles were sent, as you have heard, *to call men to the obtaining of the glory of our Lord Jesus Christ*[t]: which made the Jews so unexcusable that they *would not come unto our Lord, that they might have life*[u]; though there was the greatest reason in the world to believe this record, that *God hath given us eternal life; and this life is in his Son.*

A voice from heaven, I have shown you, often testified as much; and so did the Holy Ghost, which descended on our

[t] 2 Thess. ii. 14. [u] John v. 40.

Saviour at his baptism; and the many signs and wonders whereby God the Father sealed him, and set, as it were, his mark, stamp, and character upon him; that all might know who he was, and believe his word as undoubtedly as if they heard God the Father himself speaking to them continually with his own voice out of heaven. From thence our Saviour came, it was apparent, and therefore did not pretend to discover things of which he had no certain knowledge, but only revealed that happy country from whence he descended. So he professes to a very wise man among the Jews, who was convinced by his many miracles that he was *a teacher come from God*[x]. *Verily, verily, I say unto thee, We speak that we do know, and testify that we have seen*[y]. For as he came down from heaven, (as he further tells him[z],) so at that very moment he was there, and had a most intimate familiarity and communication therewith; and therefore might well say he had seen the things he reported from thence. What they were, you may read in the following verses; *that whosoever believeth in him should not perish, but have everlasting life*[a], &c.

The very same, as I have likewise shown, John Baptist testified[b]; and so did Moses and Elias, who appeared in glory, and discoursed with him concerning his return to the other world, after he had done the will of God here[c]. At that time our Saviour was *transfigured* (an evident token of the glorifying even of our bodies in the other state), as three persons of integrity witness; who *saw his glory*, and the two men that stood with him[d], and were themselves overshadowed with a bright cloud (an emblem of the glory to come in another world), and so ravished with the sight, that they wished they might always remain in that happy place. Neither was this only a sudden transport; but it made such a lasting impression upon their minds, that ever after they looked upon it as a notable proof of the majesty and glory of our Saviour[e]: and so did the ancient Christians, as appears by the Syriac translator of the New Testament, who before the Epistle of St. James takes notice, that now follow the Epistles of the three disciples before whom our Lord was transfigured.

[x] John iii. 2. [y] Ver. 11. [z] Ver. 13. [a] Ver. 15, 16. [b] Ver. 36. [c] Luke ix. 30, 31. [d] Ver. 32. [e] 2 Pet. i. 16, 17.

This we are to mark diligently, and take it for an eminent token of the glory to which our Lord was to go, and which he should be able to give: for it relies upon the report of those who were persons of known worth and uprightness of heart, who had no design in the world to serve but only to promote such an important truth, of which they were fully assured. They appeal to all that had any acquaintance with them, whether ever they saw or had reason to suspect any false or double dealing in them, and had not rather been witnesses of their honesty and simplicity in the whole course of their ministry. *For we are not, as many,* saith St. Paul, καπηλεύοντες τὸν λόγον τοῦ Θεοῦ, *that sell the word of God*[f], and make merchandise of it to enrich themselves thereby; (such might not stick to *corrupt* God's word, as we render it, and mix their own dreams with it;) *but with all sincerity,* as men who are authorized by God, and have him before our eyes, to whom we must give an account of our actions, *we publish the gospel of Christ:* whom they accounted it a great mercy and favour from God to serve. And *therefore, having received this ministry,* saith he[g], *we are not sluggish* in doing our duty, nor do we perform it in a base, unworthy manner, but have so *renounced* or thrust away far from us all secret devices of enriching ourselves, that we do not blush to think of our designs; (for τὰ κρυπτὰ τῆς αἰσχύνης are such practices as for mere shame men hide and cover, pretending, for instance, only the good of souls, when they intend nothing but to get their money;) nor do we *walk in craftiness,* appearing one thing and being another; nor *corrupt the word of God,* by mixing any of our own inventions with it; but in a free, open, and plain manner, *we commend ourselves to all men's consciences, as having God looking on us.* All that know us cannot but approve us, (if they be not led by passion more than reason;) and if they do not, God doth. This he repeats again, chap. vi, where he gives a proof of their sincerity in the exercise of their ministry from these two things: first, that they got nothing by it but many afflictions; and then, that they did nothing but good to others, in recompense for all the trouble they gave them. Of the former he speaks ver. 4. 5; of the second, ver. 6, 7; and then returns to the other again. Which argument he handles also at large

[f] 2 Cor. ii. 17. [g] iv. 1, 2.

towards the conclusion of the same Epistle, xi. 23, 24, &c., and once more, xii. 10.

And thus he writes also to the church of Thessalonica[h], who knew very well how faithfully they had discharged their trust, and that they did not accommodate themselves to any man's humour, but plainly delivered the message which God had committed to them. Nobody could say that they had used any *flattering speeches*[i], to soothe them up in a vain conceit of themselves, nor used any colours to hide a covetous design. No, as to their words and addresses, the Thessalonians could testify the contrary; and as to their mind and heart, which God only could know, they call him to witness it never entered into their thoughts. Nor did they seek glory and fame either from them or anybody else, but despised it as much as riches; unless it were the honour of obliging them, by communicating the blessings of the gospel to them, and receiving no reward from them[k]. They might indeed have put them to charge, and lived upon their cost, as other apostles of Christ did, and that honestly too: but he and his companions were among them with more *gentleness*[l]; they parted, that is, from their own undoubted right, to spare the Thessalonians; and as a good nurse cherishes her children, so they defrauded themselves, and took the meat, as we speak, out of their own mouths, for the good of others whom they desired to breed up in Christian piety. This shows the wonderful innocency and goodness of these men, who got nothing by the gospel, (no, not what they might have lawfully and justly taken,) but only studied how to win souls to Christ. In short, he calls them and God also to witness *how holily*, how *justly*, how *unblamably* they behaved themselves among those that believed[m]. The first of which words refers to God; the second, to those actions which belong to human society; and the third, to those which every man is bound unto severally by himself: in none of which could he, Silvanus, and Timotheus, be charged with any misdemeanour. On which argument he once more insists[n]; being so confident of his unreprovable virtue, that he desired nothing more of all that knew him but *to be followers of him*, and *to walk so as they had him for an example*[o].

[h] 1 Thess. ii. 4. [i] Ver. 5. [k] Ver. 6. [l] Ver. 7. [m] Ver. 10.
[n] 2 Tim. iii. 10, 11. [o] 1 Cor. iv. 16; Phil. iii. 17.

All which I have the more particularly noted, because it is from these men that we receive *the testimony of Jesus:* who, they assure us, chose to die the most shameful death, when he could have avoided it; and with the greatest confidence, when he was expiring, commended his spirit into the hands of God. Which is an unquestionable argument that he believed and was assured that he should be with God when he went from hence, and be able to do for his followers all that he promised. Which they tell us moreover God justified when he raised him from the dead, and carried him, in their sight, up into heaven; and afterward sent the Holy Ghost upon them, to testify that he was still alive, and possessed of an unseen glory. In which, they also tell us, he appeared to several persons, as I have already related. One of which was caught up into heaven, and heard such things there as made him wish for nothing more than to leave this earth, and to be with Christ. To whom the angels, they also assure us, witnessed upon several occasions: for they attended him at his birth, and in his life, and when he died, and after his resurrection, and when he ascended into heaven: from whence he sent them many times, as ministering spirits, to his apostles; of which we have very large testimonies in the whole book of the Revelation.

From all which we may safely conclude, that there can no other reason in the world be given why any man thus informed should not believe the gospel, but only his own desperate wickedness: for the things propounded therein are most desirable above all other. It reveals such a wonderful love of God to mankind, that all men would rejoice to hear the news of it, were they not averse to those pious and virtuous courses whereby they are told they must attain it. Nothing attracts all hearts so much as the hope of a blessed immortality: which is testified to us so credibly in the gospel, that nothing could make men turn their ears away from it by infidelity, but only the incurable wickedness of their nature; which will not let them part with those vices which the gospel says they must quit for so great a good. In one word, there is nothing in this book but what is suitable to all men's desires, save only the holy rule of life; and therefore it can be nothing else but their hatred to this which makes them reject all the rest. They would follow their nobler appetite after those good

things which the gospel promises, if they had not perfectly given up themselves to those baser appetites which must be denied for their sake. For *if our gospel be hid,* saith St. Paul in the place before mentioned, *it is hid to them that are lost: in whom the god of this world hath blinded the minds of them which believe not, lest the light of the glorious gospel of Christ, who is the image of God, should shine unto them*[p]. That which the gospel reports is as clear as the noon-day. Nothing can be more visible than the φωτισμὸς τοῦ εὐαγγελίου τῆς δόξης τοῦ Χριστοῦ, '*the light* or the *splendour of the gospel of the glory of Christ:*' by which, saith Theophylact[q], the apostle means the belief of these great truths, *that Jesus was crucified, that he was received up into heaven, and that he will give future rewards.* This is the φωτισμὸς, *splendour,* the apostle speaks of, which if any man do not see, after such evident demonstrations of these things, it is his wickedness hinders him. And such men, after they have long resisted the light, fall under the power of the devil so inevitably, that he blinds their eyes. Mark, as St. Chrysostom observes[r], that the Scripture calls several things by the name of a *god,* not from their own worth and excellence, but ἀπὸ τῆς ἀσθενείας τῶν ὑποταττομένων, 'from the weakness of those who are subject to them.' Thus Mammon is the god of some, and the belly the god of others, and the devil the god of all such persons; because they are basely enslaved to the love of money, and of their fleshly appetite, and he rules and governs them as absolutely as if he were their god. Yet he hath no power quite to blind their eyes, as he further observes, before they disbelieve that which is so credibly reported by such divine arguments: for, as the very words of St. Paul are, *he blinds the minds of them that believe not:* γεγόνασιν ἄπιστοι δι' ἑαυτοὺς, 'they became infidels of themselves;' and having given themselves over to unbelief, against such miraculous evidence of the truth of the Christain faith, God gives them over to him: to whose service they have so slavishly devoted themselves, that they cannot be recovered; but, as they deserve, must unavoidably perish.

From which miserable condition let all those who are inclined to infidelity take care to save themselves, by timely con-

[p] 2 Cor. iv. 3, 4. [q] [In loc. tom. ii. p. 263 B.]
[r] [In loc. tom. x. p. 493 D.]

sidering those divine demonstrations which these holy men of God have reported to us; who beheld our Saviour's glory, *the glory as of the only-begotten of the Father, full of grace and truth*[q]. Upon which words hear what the same eloquent bishop writes; who thus sums up a great part of the evidence we have for the Christian belief.

"The angels appeared in great glory upon the earth to Daniel, David, and Moses; but they appeared as servants, as those that had a Master. It is the peculiar glory of our Saviour, that he appeared as a Lord, as having power over all: and though in a poor and vile fashion, yet even in that the creation knew its Lord and Master. A star from heaven called the wise men to worship him. A great company of angels often attended him, and sang his praises. To whom others succeeded, who published his glory, and delivered this secret mystery one to another: the angels to the shepherds, and the shepherds to those in the city; and Gabriel to Mary and Elizabeth; and Anna and Simeon to those in the temple. Nor were men and women only transported with the pleasure; but an infant that had not seen the light leaped in its mother's womb; and all were strangely lifted up in hopes of what was a coming. These things all fell out straightway after his birth. But when he appeared in the world, there were more miracles, and greater than the former, appeared again. For not so little as a star and the heavens, not angels or archangels, not Gabriel or Michael, but the Father himself proclaimed him from heaven: and with the Father, the Comforter came down with a voice, and remained on him. And therefore well might the apostle say, *We have seen his glory, the glory as of the only-begotten of the Father*. And not by these things alone, but by those which followed after. For now not merely shepherds, and an aged prophetess, and reverend men, published the glad tidings of the gospel; but the voice itself of the things he did, louder than the sound of any trumpet: which was heard presently every where. For *the fame of him*, saith the evangelist, *went into all Syria*[r]; and revealed him to all, and cried every where that the King of heaven was come to men. For demons every where fled and got away; and the

[q] John i. 14. [r] [Matt. iv. 24.]

devil departed; and death began to give place, and not long after quite vanished; and all manner of infirmities were loosed; and the tombs dismissed the dead; the demons left those that were mad, and diseases those that were sick. Wonderful and strange things were to be seen, which the prophets desired to see, and did not. For one might have seen eyes new made, paralytic limbs strengthened, motion given to withered hands and lame feet, ears that were stopped up opened, and the tongues of the dumb loosed. In one word, like an excellent workman that comes into an house which is decayed and rotten by time, he repaired, or rebuilt rather, human nature.

"For who can tell how he made the souls of men new, which is a greater wonder than all the rest? For the wills of men oppose their cure, which the body doth not. They will not yield, we see; no, not to God himself. And yet these were reformed by him, and all kind of wickedness expelled. Nor were they only freed from sin; but, like the bodies to which he gave the best habit after he had cured their diseases, they were advanced to the highest degree of virtue. A publican became an apostle; a persecutor, a blasphemer, a reproacher of Christianity, turned the preacher of the word; a thief was made a citizen of Paradise; and a strumpet became illustrious by a great faith. And abundance of others, worse than these, were listed in the number of the disciples, till whole cities and countries were strangely reformed by the gospel. Who is able to declare the wisdom of his precepts, the virtue of his heavenly laws, the excellent order of his angelical conversation? For he hath taught us such a life, he hath given us such laws, and instituted such a polity, that they who use them, though before the worst of men, straightway become angels, and like to God, according to our power. The evangelist therefore, recollecting all these things, the miracles he wrought upon men's bodies, upon their souls, and upon the elements; the precepts, the secret gifts, the laws, the polity, the power of persuasion, the future promises, his sufferings; he pronounced this wonderful lofty voice, *We beheld his glory, the glory as of the only-begotten of the Father, full of grace and truth.*

"For they did not admire him only for his miracles, but for

his sufferings. As for example, because he was nailed to a cross and scourged; because he was beaten; because he was spit upon; because those buffeted him, to whom he had been a benefactor: upon the account even of these, which seem most shameful, that voice is worthy to be repeated again; because he himself hath called this a glory. For then death was destroyed, the curse was dissolved, demons were put to shame, and he triumphed over them openly, and the hand-writing of sins, or obligation to punishment, was nailed to the cross and cancelled. And besides these wonders, which were invisible, there were others apparent unto all; which showed he was the only-begotten Son of God, and the Lord of all the creation. For while his blessed body yet hung upon the cross, the sun withdrew its beams, the earth was astonished and wrapt in darkness, the ground shook, the tombs were broke open, a great many dead people walked out of their graves, and went into the city, the stone upon his grave was rolled away, and he arose. He that was crucified, he that was fastened with nails to the cross, he that was dead, arose; and filling his apostles with great power, sent them to all the world, as the common physicians of human nature, the rectifiers of men's lives, the sowers of the knowledge of heavenly doctrine, the loosers of the devil's tyranny, the teachers of the great and hidden goods, the preachers of the glad tidings of the immortality of the soul, the eternal life of the body, and the rewards which (as they pass all understanding, so) never have any end. These, and many more such like this blessed man beholding, (which he knew, but was not able to write, because the world could not have contained the books,) he cried out, *We beheld his glory, the glory as of the only-begotten of the Father, full of grace and truth.* Who is now as able, I may add, to give us new bodies, and inconceivably improved souls, and then to perpetuate the happiness of both in heaven; as he was to cure diseases, and raise dead bodies, and purify men's minds, when he was here on earth [q]."

"Let our conclusion therefore," as he says elsewhere, "be suitable to our discourse. And what is so suitable as doxologies and giving glory to God, in such manner as is worthy of him?

[q] S. Chrysostom. Hom. xii. in Johan. [tom. viii. p. 67 sqq.]

not by our words only, that is, but much more by our deeds. So our Saviour himself exhorts us, saying, *Let your light so shine before men, that they may see your good works, and glorify your Father which is heaven.* For there is nothing more bright and shining than an excellent conversation, as one of the wise men hath said: *The ways of the just shine like the light*[r]. And they shine not only to those that light their lamps by their works, but to all that are near unto them. Therefore let us pour oil continually into these lamps, that the flame may rise higher, and the light shine more abundantly[s]."

"Having received such grace and truth by Jesus Christ, let us not grow the lazier by the greatness of the gift. For the greater honour hath been done us, the more we are bound to excel in virtue. Let that therefore be our business, to purify ourselves so thoroughly, that, being thought worthy to see Christ, we may not at that day be delivered over to the severe tormenting powers, but to those that are able to bring us to the inheritance in heaven, which is prepared for those that love him. Which God grant we may all obtain, through the grace and loving-kindness of our Lord Jesus Christ; to whom be glory and dominion for ever and ever. Amen[t]."

CHAP. XIV.

A further improvement of this Record.

THE grounds of Christian belief, you see, are not so slender, but I may take the confidence to say, that he who will be at the pains to consider such things as these, cannot any longer think it a piece of wit to be an infidel. It is rank folly, as well as baseness; there being no reason in the earth to except against these witnesses, and to deny the faith of Christ an entrance into our minds and hearts. For what we know, as I have shown in the former book, by credible report, is as certain as what we see and hear with our eyes and ears. And what can be better attested than the holy gospel? Which is justly called *the testimony of God*[u], and *the testimony of Christ*[x]: because God testified these things to us as his will,

[r] [Prov. iv. 18.] [s] Hom. xiii. [p. 76.] [t] Id. [p. 77.]
[u] 1 Cor. ii. 1. [x] i. 6.

by his Son Christ; and Christ testified them to us by the Holy Ghost. For so St. Paul saith in the place last named, the Corinthians were *enriched* by our Lord *with every gift; even as the testimony of Christ was confirmed*, or established to be a truth, *among them*[y].

After which mighty evidence, whereby we are assured God intends to bestow so great a blessing on us as immortal life, it is of no weight, whatsoever can be objected against this doctrine; particularly, against that part of it which concerns the resurrection of the body at the last day. For that great Lord who said it, we are certain can perform it. He knew his own power; and would not have said, *I will raise you up at the last day*, unless he had been able to make his word good. He hath also already fulfilled his word in other things which he foretold, though nobody would believe him till they saw it: which is a good ground, as St. Gregory Nyssen observes, to expect this, though it seem never so difficult, and incredible, had he not promised it. "Suppose," saith he, "that an husbandman, discoursing of the virtue of seeds, should not be believed by a bystander that had never been bred in the country, nor seen any thing of that nature: would it not be sufficient for his satisfaction, to take but one single grain out of an heap of corn, and to tell him he should see in that the virtue of all the rest? For he that sees one grain of wheat or barley cast into the ground, coming up after some time a full ear, will never doubt of the fruitfulness of all the rest of the same kind. Even just so, saith he, it seems to me a sufficient testimony of the resurrection, that the truth of other things, which he foretold, cannot be denied. In them we have an experiment, whereby we may judge of every thing else that he hath said[z]."

But to demand that every thing should be made out by reason before we receive it, is to make us philosophers, not Christians; whose name is Believers. And besides, the best philosophers cannot tell us how the corn I now mentioned grows up from a little seed cast into the ground, or a man from so small a beginning in his mother's womb; or any thing considerable of the manner how all natural productions are performed. And therefore what folly is it to resolve not to be

[y] Ver. 5, 6. [z] De Opificio Hominis, cap. xxv. [tom. i. p. 110.]

satisfied, unless we show how a dead body can be raised! It is sufficient to know that *idoneus est reficere qui fecit*, as Tertullian speaks in this case, 'he that made it at first is able to make it again.' It being more, as he goes on, to make, than to remake; to give a beginning to a thing, than to restore it after it is dissolved. And we have this also to satisfy us; that multitudes saw our Saviour raise men from the dead, and by other miraculous works demonstrate that he wants not power to do any thing he hath promised. His word may well be taken for any thing to come, who hath already done such wonders as are credibly reported to us, by those that were spectators of them, in the Gospel.

"And it is very remarkable how he deals with us as a mother doth with her child: into whose tender mouth she first thrusts her breast to nourish it with milk; and when the teeth come, gives it bread; and when it is grown stronger, feeds it with solid meat. Even so our blessed Lord, διὰ τῶν κατωτέρων τῆς θαυματοποιίας ἀρξάμενος, &c., 'beginning with lower miracles at the first,' prepares our faith by degrees for the highest. He began with the cure of desperate diseases, in which τὴν τῆς ἀναστάσεως προοιμιάζεται δύναμιν, 'he prefaced to his power of raising the dead.' For that which men thought impossible, he showed hereby was not incredible. Who could have thought, that one sick of a burning fever should be made so well by speaking a word, as to rise presently, and minister to the company? yet Simon's wife's mother was an instance of this miraculous power in our Saviour. Who added something to this miracle when he restored the nobleman's son to health, though he was *at the point of death*, as his father thought[a]; and this without touching, or coming near him. For he did not stir from the place where he was at Cana, and yet sent life to him as far as Capernaum, by the sole power of his command. After which he proceeded to an higher miracle; for he restored another ruler's daughter to life who died before he came to her rescue. And again he exceeded this miracle, by raising up the woman's son of Nain, when he was carrying out to be buried. And at last (as hath been before observed) he raised his wonder-working power so high, that he called Lazarus out of his grave, when he had been dead four days.

[a] John iv. 47.

"Thus he raises our minds by little and little to the highest pitch of faith; to believe, that is, the resurrection of the dead. He teaches us to expect that in general, the experiment of which he hath shown in particulars. For, as the apostle saith, *the Lord shall descend with a shout*[b], &c. at the restoration of all things, to raise the dead to a state of incorruption: even so now, he that lay in his grave was awakened by the voice of our Saviour's command, and shaking off his corruption, came whole and sound out of his tomb; the bands wherewith his hands and feet were tied nothing hindering. Is this nothing to confirm our belief of the resurrection, when we have not only our Lord's word for it, but, by those whom he restored to life, we have in deed a demonstration of what he hath promised? What pretence is there now for unbelief? Why do we not slight all those who by philosophy and vain deceit set themselves against a simple faith; and stick to this naked confession, that there will be a resurrection of the body to eternal life[c]?"

And to make our holy belief more acceptable to all Christian souls, let me briefly add, that faith being as certain a way of knowing as any other, believers must needs be the most knowing men in the world. Which is a very great motive to faith; whereby we are informed of a great many things, and those the most excellent, of which other men's minds are perfectly ignorant. It gives a new light to the soul, whereby to see things invisible. There is no less than a whole world of things that believers are acquainted withal, which are hid from their eyes who remain in darkness by continuing in unbelief. While the thoughts of such souls are confined within the narrow bounds of this visible world, and know but little of it neither, the minds of believers are enlarged beyond the limits of all things seen, to behold another and far more glorious world: in which Jesus is the sun, and the angels and spirits of just men are the stars, and the brightness of the divine glory is the light and splendour. In this the ancient Christians justly made their boast: and there being a company of vain men, who pretended to be γνωστικοὶ, 'knowers,' men of intelligence beyond all others, but indeed unbelievers, Clemens

[b] 1 Thess. iv. 16. [c] Greg. Nyss. De Opif. Hom. c. xxv. [tom. i. p. 110.]

Alexandrinus reproves their folly, and tells them; 'Ημεῖς ἐσμεν οἱ ἐν τῷ ἀπιστουμένῳ πιστοὶ, καὶ οἱ ἐν τῷ ἀγνώστῳ γνωστικοί· 'We are they who believe that which is incredible to others; and therefore are they who know that which is unknown to others[d].'

None so knowing as they that believe the gospel: and therefore let us not shut this faith out of our souls, and thereby exclude the greatest good. Nor let us think ourselves unhappy because we do not see that which we expect: for this would be to complain of our privilege and preeminence above those that depend merely on sense, and will not be wise beyond the narrow confines of their eyes. Faith is that divine gift whereby God raises our minds above the pitch of vulgar souls. He brings us acquainted by this means with the most noble and glorious objects, and illuminates us with the most comfortable knowledge: without which we shall remain, notwithstanding all our other wisdom, in a sad dull night of ignorance and darkness.

And if this faith touch our hearts also, it will raise us to as excellent a temper of spirit, and make us truly heavenly and divine. We shall feel it altering the very frame of our thoughts, designs, and desires. It will lead us to such a pitch of virtue, that we shall adhere to God and goodness whatsoever befals us; and solely depending on his promises, trust ourselves with him, both when all other things fail us, and when we have the greatest supports that they can lend us. Which is no easy thing to flesh and blood, as Philo[e] excellently observes: (for that inclines us to trust in riches, and power, and dignity, and friends, and strength of body, and a number of such things:) but μεγάλης καὶ ὀλυμπίου διανοίας ἔργον, 'the work of a great and heavenly mind,' which cannot be enticed by any thing on earth to rely upon it. An example of which we have in Abraham, who believed God and obeyed his voice, when he called him from his own country and his father's house, *and he went out not knowing whither he went.* Divers such instances there are of the power of divine faith in him and in others, in the 11th chapter of the Epistle to the Hebrews.

[d] Lib. v. Stromat. [p. 644.]

[e] L. Quis rerum Divin. hæres, p. 493. [p. 486. ed. Mangey.]

From which we may certainly conclude, that nothing can be too hard for the faith of Christ; which is built upon surer grounds and a stronger foundation than theirs was. It is of such mighty force, I have shown, that one would think there needs no more to be done to make all the world good; but only, by such means as I have declared, to implant this faith in all men's hearts.

But such is the perverseness of human nature, that our work is not done when the judgment is convinced. There must be new arts of insinuation used by those convictions to awaken and engage the affections. The motives are certain and sure, strong and powerful; but men are weak and impotent, careless and unconcerned about their own good. After they know how things are, they must be made to consider, lest a quickening motive lie in a dead hand or a cold heart, which draws forth none of its virtue. And there is no way, that I can think of, to stir them up to consideration, but by propounding a few sensibly affecting questions to them, which shall be part of the business of this last chapter.

V.

1. Let him therefore that believes this Record, that God hath given us eternal life in his Son Jesus, ask himself what he thinks in his conscience is the way to this supreme felicity. May we live here just as we list, and yet hope hereafter to live with Christ? Or can we reasonably think to come to him without any thought about it; and to be received up to his heavenly kingdom, though we mind nothing now but what we can get in this world? Strange! that Christian people should imagine piety and virtue to be things superfluous! and take the mortifying the lusts of the flesh, the lust of the eye, and the pride of life, to be nothing else but a piece of monastical austerity, and melancholic devotion! a thing which mere black choler and a peevish disposition makes men trouble themselves and the world withal! Are we so blind as to think that a careful endeavour after an inoffensive life towards God and towards men is but a precise nicety, which may be commended in those that have nothing else to do, but is of no necessity to our living eternally with God? We cannot, sure, be so forsaken of our reason: no, nor think that the business of religion is only

to hear the word of God, and to be frequently on our knees; and that we need not be so solicitous how to live and walk in the ways of God's commandments. What man instructed in the gospel can be so senseless as to think by knocking often at heaven-gates to get an entrance, though otherwise he stands idle? Do the holy books inspire us with any such conceits? Do they tell us some holy breath will waft us safe over the dangerous sea of worldly affairs, troubles, pleasures, and temptations of various kinds? Needs there no labour at the sails or the oars, no wise guidance and steerage of the vessel, no guard and defence against pirates, but a man may confidently commit himself to the winds, and let his vessel run whither they will carry it? May he live, I mean, just as the course of the world hurries him, and as he is driven by the blast of outward accidents, sometimes this way, and sometimes the quite contrary; in good company, and after some pathetic exhortations, doing well, and then crossing all again when a new temptation to sin solicits him? Sure such men as can believe thus fancy heaven a void and empty space, where company is wanting; and imagine our Saviour cares not who comes thither, so it be but filled. They live as if all the regions above, the glorious paradise of God, were but so much waste ground, which needs a colony of planters; it matters not of what quality they are, so it be but inhabited. O vile thoughts! that can imagine God wants the company of such as care not for him; and that heaven, which threw out the angels that sinned, will entertain those who join with them in their foul rebellion! It is a wonderful grace, that he will invite us on any terms to his most blessed society. We do him no kindness, but ourselves, in seeking his heavenly kingdom. Into which if we will not enter at such a gate as he sets open, we shall be shut out, and perish in our perverse ingratitude or foolish presumption.

Consider, I beseech you, what do all these *witnesses* say concerning the way to it? Do they not tell us that *strait is the gate and narrow the way that leads to life*[f]? that we must *strive to enter*[g]? and that *there shall in no wise enter into the holy city any thing that defileth*[h]? and that *without holiness*

[f] Matt. vii. 14. [g] Luke xiii. 24. [h] Rev. xxi. 27.

no man shall see the Lord[i]? which we must therefore excite ourselves, by his promises, *to perfect in the fear of God; having cleansed ourselves from all filthiness of the flesh and spirit*[k]: and *giving all diligence, add to our faith, virtue; and to virtue, knowledge; and to knowledge, temperance; and to temperance, patience; and to patience, godliness; and to godliness, brotherly kindness; and to brotherly kindness, charity: for so an entrance shall be ministered to us abundantly into the everlasting kingdom of our Lord and Saviour Jesus Christ*[l]. Examine every one of them, and they will tell you as much. The *Father*, by a voice from heaven, bids us *hear his Son*; who says, *Not every one that saith unto me, Lord, Lord, shall enter into the kingdom of heaven: but he that doeth the will of my Father which is in heaven*[m]. And the *Word* saith, *Blessed are they that do his commandments, that they may have right to the tree of life, and may enter in through the gates into the city*[n]. *Wherefore, as the Holy Ghost saith, To day if ye will hear his voice, harden not your hearts*[o]. This was its language of old; and it was poured also upon the apostles, *that repentance and remission of sins might be preached in our Saviour's name among all nations*[p]. Which is the end also of our being washed with *Water* in his name: for *we are baptized into his death*; and therefore ought to *reckon ourselves to be dead indeed unto sin, but alive unto God through Jesus Christ our Lord. Let not sin therefore reign in your mortal body, that ye should obey it in the lusts thereof*[q]. For his blood was shed, *that he might redeem us from all iniquity, and purify unto himself a peculiar people, zealous of good works*[r]. For which end also he was raised from the dead (by the eternal *Spirit*), that he might *bless us, in turning every one of us from his iniquities*[s]. And therefore *this* the apostles *say and testify in the Lord, that we henceforth walk not as other Gentiles walk*[t]. *For God hath not called us unto uncleanness, but unto holiness. He therefore that despiseth, despiseth not man, but God*, (saith St. Paul,) *who hath also given unto us his Holy Spirit*[u].

[i] Heb. xii. 14. [k] 2 Cor. vii. 1. [l] 2 Pet. i. 5, 6, 7, 11. [m] Matt. vii. 21. [n] Rev. xxii. 14. [o] Heb. iii. 7, 8. [p] Luke xxiv. 47, 49. [q] Rom. vi. 3, 11, 12. [r] Tit. ii. 14. [s] Acts iii. 26. [t] Eph. iv. 17. [u] 1 Thess. iv. 7, 8.

And if I should now send you to inquire, and *ask for the old paths*, as Jeremiah speaks, would you find that the ancient Christians knew any other way to bliss than this? Did they, who, "while they were in the flesh, lived not according to it; who, being upon earth, had their conversation in heaven; whose lives excelled the best laws and statutes of their several countries, which they strictly obeyed; who loved all, though persecuted by all; who blessed when they were cursed, honoured those that treated them despitefully, did good to those who punished them as evil-doers[x]," &c.: did these men, I say, believe that heaven might be won only by their prayers, or by perpetual disputing about that religion which they did not practise? How come we then to have so great a fondness for ourselves as to think that we shall carry that by the name and the profession of Christianity, which they could not get without so much labour? and to have such cheap thoughts of the crown of glory as to imagine it will bow and come down to those idle wishes, unto which there is nothing so mean in this world but scorns to stoop?

That one thought is sufficient to convince us what we have to do to be happy. I need not send you so far as those elder times; go but to yourselves, and inquire how you do in the affairs of this world. Sure, men never got their estates with so little care as they hope to get heaven. Ask a man why he follows his business so close, and he will tell you, that an estate is not got by wishing; that a family cannot be provided for by lying in bed, or sitting by the fire-side; that there are opportunities which must be narrowly watched, and cheats which are not easily discovered. And yet, to see the imprudence and inconsiderateness of mankind! The same person thinks to go to heaven, and possess all the treasures there, by his prayers alone, though cold too, and but little observed; or by a lame repentance, which wants its effects; nay, by a death-bed groan, a few forced tears, and promises never performed; by some short snatches of religion, a careless behaviour, and an unwatchful life. He minds no occasion of doing or receiving good; is indifferent whether he lay hold of opportunities and good seasons; seldom thinks of the place whither he would go;

[x] Vid. pl. ap. Justin. Mart. Epist. ad Diognet. p. 497. [ed. Ben. p. 236 B.]

denies himself nothing to which he hath a mind; bridles no appetite, curbs no passion; nay, will be drunk for company, and swear, rather than be thought such a coward as to stand in awe of God, or to want the breeding of a gentleman; and, in brief, doth not half so much upon the account of eternal life as many a man does for a single penny.

What a strange dulness is this, to imagine that all ends which we aim at must be compassed by means proportionable to their greatness but only the very greatest and last end of all! The soldier gets not the victory by mere railing at his enemy, but, as the apostle speaks, *endures hardness*, and *entangles not himself with the affairs of this life*[y]. And it is the *labouring husbandman*, as it there follows, who *partakes of the fruits. All things* in the world, as Solomon saith, *are full of labour:* and do we think that our souls only are exempted, and may be saved by doing nothing? that virtue will grow there without our care? or that an eternal harvest of joy will spring up to us without labouring to do virtuously? It is a great shame to say it, but such are the hopes of foolish men: who are perfectly like the Israelites, of whom God says, *Ephraim is an heifer that is taught* to plough, *but loveth* only *to tread out the corn*[z]: that is, as D. Kimchi glosses, they were taught the law, and instructed to do good, but minded nothing else but merely to enjoy the promises in a fat and fruitful land which God had given them.

Let such remember (for a story sometimes sticks longer in their minds than the greatest reason) what a wise man among the Jews said to a friend of his, whom he met exceeding sad and dejected about some affairs which went cross to his designs[a]. "What's the matter," said he, "that thou goest so heavily? doth any thing of this world trouble thee?" "Yes," said the other. "And what hast thou got," said the wise man again, "by all thy care, solicitude, and vexation?" "Alas!" replied his friend, "thou seest by my troubled countenance how little I have got." "Then," said the wise man, "consider; if of this world, which thou hast followed with such diligence, thou hast got so little, what art thou like to get of the other world, which thou mindest not at all?" A very good meditation for those

[y] 2 Tim. ii. 3, &c. [z] Hosea x. 11. [a] [Apophthegm. Patr. lib. iii. 250. p. 398. ad calc. Vitæ Mosis per Gaulmyn.]

who, after all their labour and thoughtfulness, are like to leave no great matters to their posterity; and for those whose greatest cunning and industry is not able to bring about their ends. And it may lead us to another profitable meditation; how unequal we are in our dealing, while we lay out so many thoughts and so much labour upon things we are not sure to obtain, and so few and so little upon those which, as sure as God is true, shall be the portion of them that diligently seek them. The soldier is not sure to win the victory, after all the hardship he has endured; and the frost may nip, and the bitter winds blast, the laborious husbandman's fairest hopes: there is no design, save only that we have for heaven, but, after our best diligence, may miscarry. What madness then is it thus to misplace our endeavours by employing them so seriously about those things which frequently avoid us and fly from us; in the mean time neglecting those of infinite more value, which earnestly court us, and are desirous to bestow themselves upon us!

But there is no need of so many words to awaken our thoughts to judge aright in these matters. And yet this is all we have to do for our salvation, (when we believe the gospel,) to think often what we believe and expect to receive from the bounty of heaven.

II. Which if every one did, it might spare me the labour of asking again, whether we think in our conscience it is any great matter God demands of us, when he bids us, if we will obtain eternal life, obey his will revealed to us by Christ Jesus. Review the Christian doctrine, a brief account of which I gave in the former book[b]; and when you have seen all that you are to do, or to deny and suffer for righteousness' sake, consider to what it will amount. If we take it comparatively, and cast it into the scales against immortal life and the weight of glory, it will presently seem so little, light, and inconsiderable, that we shall not think it worth the speaking of. But let us wave that advantage, and only consider every thing in itself absolutely.

1. What great matter is it that we find God expects we should do for him? Had he bid us govern the world, and rule the nations of the earth, he had set us a difficult task indeed;

[b] Chap. v. [vol. ii. p. 465.]

but when he requires us only to govern ourselves, to set in order our affections, and to subdue our unruly passions, which give us no small trouble, and expose us to great danger, what a reasonable demand is this! and upon what easy terms does he offer eternal life! We might have complained if he had but required every one of us to be rich, and to get great estates; much more if he had expected we should be philosophers, and be able to give an account of the secrets of nature, and resolve all the questions we meet withal about the air and the water, and the rest of the elements: but when he only bids us be content with our portion, and stay for what his wisdom will dispense to us, and make a sober use of it; and be so wise as to acknowledge him in all things, and to discern good from evil, and live virtuously in the enjoyment of him and of ourselves, and give a reasonable account of all our actions; one may well wonder what men would have God to say, if they call this a very heavy burden. But what if he should command us, with Abraham, to offer up an only son; or to feed all our life upon bread and water; or, with the anchorets, dig our graves in the wilderness, and have no other tools but our nails to do it? Should we not think it very hard, though we cannot say, as we may of the former, that it is impossible? And yet, comparatively speaking, heaven would be a great bargain after all this. What a purchase then is it, when he calls for no sacrifice but that of our *own bodies*, which we are to present him holy, chaste, and pure, with true devotion and humility of spirit; together with the *sacrifice of praise* continually; *giving thanks unto him* for all his benefits; and *not forgetting to do good, and to communicate;* which are all *reasonable services*, and *sacrifices with which God is well pleased*[b]! At what lower rate can eternal life be set than this, that we will not be unreasonable? When will we be pleased, if it will not satisfy us to know that God will give us eternal life, provided we will live soberly, and be grateful to him who is the giver of all good things, and do to others as we would that they should do to us? Is God beholden to us when we accept of these terms of salvation? They that imagine this too great a mortification, and that they do some mighty matter when they take this course

[b] Rom. xii. 1; Heb. xiii. 15, 16.

to go to heaven, must mortify that conceit, or it is not likely they will come thither.

2. But let us proceed to consider what it is we must deny and suffer to attain this felicity; and see to what the reckoning will come. If we put our sins into the number of those things we must forsake; it is apparent already, it would be a trouble to keep them. We are required indeed to *crucify the flesh;* which seems an hard saying. But when we have inquired the meaning of it, there is no severity to be found in it. For it doth not oblige us to destroy, or so much as to impair, any faculty belonging to us: neither to weaken the understanding, nor dull the apprehension, nor overload the memory; no, nor consume our spirits, nor deform our bodies, nor prejudice our healths, nor spoil our beauty, or any thing else that God hath made. There is no true pleasure of which he deprives us; unless it be sometimes for a better and more excellent end. He only abridges our unjust liberty, and limits the hurtful excesses of our desires and passions; which we are not to gratify against our reason, to the injury of ourselves or our neighbours, and to the endangering the loss of some better good. In brief, he allows us to please ourselves, so that every part of us be pleased; our judgment and conscience, as well as the lower appetites. And what now doth all this amount unto, but the doing ourselves a real and entire kindness?

But in some state of things God will have us forsake all our worldly goods and possessions for the kingdom of heaven's sake; as he required the apostles and the first disciples to Christianity. True. But do we not set too high a price upon these things, if we value our obedience at a great rate upon this account? I will let alone the comparison we ought to make between our loss and our gain. Weigh things impartially by themselves, and consider what it is we part withal, should we suffer all our worldly goods to be taken from us, rather than part with our religion. Do we lose any more than a philosopher hath left of his own accord, for the convenience of his study; and that he might not be encumbered in his contemplations? And while we had them, were all those things necessary for us? Doth nature require so much? Did not a great many of them lie by us unused? What a small matter now does the account come to, when we have made this abatement!

And how little reason is there that the parting with these things should make such a noise, as if we had made some exceeding rich present to God's almighty love, from whom we received them!

But let us look upon them again, together with the loss of life; and consider, Are they things which we could have kept very long? Do we any more than part with them a little before the time? And what difference is there between their leaving us, and our leaving them; but the advantage we have, by living a while after them, to give a proof of a little very short patience, and of entire trust in God, and absolute resignation to his will? Let the things we leave for God's sake be rated as high as we please, all that can be made of them comes at last to this; that, in obedience to God, we let them go a little before we could not enjoy them. And suppose we be required to die; it is but to go another way out of the world than we must shortly, perhaps presently, have done. There is no difference at all, but only as much as there is between a sword, and an acute disease; between the flames of fire, and those of a burning fever.

But we may endure many torments, perhaps, in the world before we die, which are worse than death itself. It may be so; and there is a possibility it may not be so. Now supposing we do not suffer any torments, what a small matter is it that God asks, that we may go to heaven! where we shall have an happiness so great, that we may well, *if need be*, (as St. Peter speaks,) consent to endure something that looks more like self-denial than any thing I have mentioned, to obtain it. And yet when that necessity comes, this will arise to no great expense. It is no more than we may naturally suffer by the stone, or the gout, or by some such disease which may seize upon us; and not carry us to heaven neither. And it is likewise considerable, that wicked men many times take more pains, and endure a great deal more than this comes to, to go to hell. Do we not see what attendance their lusts require from them, and that they make provision for their satisfaction with much solicitude and trouble? Nay, do not their expenses frequently run very high, to gratify some worldly or fleshly desire? One man breaks his sleep; another pines his body; a third consumes his estate; a fourth nourishes loathsome and

foul diseases; a fifth breeds cruel and tormenting pains, which set him upon the rack; a sixth ventures his life, and runs the hazard of the gallows, or of a severer death. And all sinners contrive and plot and trouble their brains to find opportunities, and are often vexed with disappointments, and as often put to shame, and always troubled with their desires till they meet with some satisfaction; and being never satisfied, are always troubled with their restless desires.

Let all these things be considered soberly; and then tell me, whether God demands great things of us, to obtain eternal life; and doth not rather wonderfully oblige us, in accepting so graciously our poor services: nay, carries us from the happiness of doing his will here to the happiness of having it rewarded with a most glorious recompense in another world.

And cast in this consideration also, (which Clemens Alexandrinus[c] propounds to the Gentiles,) how much many men would be willing to give, if it were set at a price, to purchase everlasting salvation. And therefore what account can they give of their unwillingness to accept of that on such easy terms, which cannot be bought with all the gold, if we had it, of the fabulous Pactolus? We may purchase this most precious salvation, if we will, οἰκείῳ θησαυρῷ, 'with our own treasure,' which we have within ourselves; viz. *charity, and a lively faith.* This is its just price, saith he, which God will gladly accept. For *we hope in the living God, who is the Saviour of all men, especially of the faithful.* But it cannot be obtained by any other means. For they that stick to this world as weeds do to the rocks in the sea, slight immortality; and judge themselves unworthy of the other world, which at so low a rate offered itself to their faith and charity.

III. But we have just reason to proceed a great deal further than all this; and supposing a man could always live here without the least trouble, and in the fullest contentment that either his soul or body can now enjoy, I ask again, whether a man that believes the gospel would be willing to have his eternal life in this world; and not rather choose to go thither, where both soul and body shall be so wonderfully improved, as to be capable of more solid, pure and durable pleasures than this earth can ever afford. He that considers how weak hu-

[c] Admon. ad Gentes, p. 55. [p. 71. ed. Potter.]

man nature is in this state, and how unable to entertain itself long with any of those things which please our senses, will not take much time to resolve this question. Should we be furnished with the best delights that nature can crave, in the most perfect health and vigorous strength; still we should find either fulness and satiety, or lassitude and weariness follow the enjoyment. This is a great part of man's vanity in his best estate; that all his fruitions either suppose, or make, a consumption of his spirits.

And how short our understandings are and will be while we apprehend by the brain, and are forced to spend so much time in serving our bodily necessities, we cannot but be sensible; and therefore shall always be possessed with desires which cannot here be satisfied, and long to know those things of which, should we stay never so many ages here, we must remain ignorant. Who would not then, that hath any hopes in another world, freely consent to a dissolution, in order to a better conjunction of soul and body, in a state of greater strength and sprightliness to enjoy a fuller good; with greater constancy, without any weariness or dejection of appetite, with perfect satisfaction, and an eternal pleasure in enjoying the same again?

And if we agree to this, judge then what reason there is to be exceeding solicitous to attain that heavenly bliss, which so inconceivably transcends all that we can fancy to ourselves, but are never like to enjoy in this world. And judge again how unworthy then this short, this troublesome life, which is but like a dream, full of distracted thoughts, and cares, and fears, is, to come into any competition with that eternal life which we expect. And once more, how mad they are who prefer a brutal, wicked life, which mere rational men have hissed out of the world, before that happy state, which far exceeds even the life of innocence in a paradise upon earth.

IV. And let us hence take occasion to consider again: if it be not desirable alway to stay here on this earth, how far distant are they from the happiness of the other world who have their thoughts very rarely there. What shall we think of such careless believers as love not to have their minds troubled with the thoughts of death and of eternal life; with which they desire to have as little acquaintance as may be

till they come thither? Are they afraid of believing it too strongly, for fear it should spoil all their earthly delights, and make them lose the relish they have of bodily pleasures; or hinder their business, and make them have no list to follow it? There is no danger of this, for a lively belief of the life to come heightens all our other joys, by making them innocent, and furthers our affairs, by making us diligent, but not too solicitous. But some such fancy possesses the hearts of men, who have no inclination to entertain any familiarity with heaven till they think they are shortly to leave this earth. For if we desire them to think often and seriously of eternal life, they return such an answer as Antipater made to a man that presented him with a book concerning happiness, Οὐ σχολάζω, 'I am not at leisure:' tell me of this when I have nothing else to do; now I have other more weighty employments. This is the sense of men's gross negligence, and their seldom retiring to look up unto Jesus: who justly expected not only that greater multitudes, upon the publishing of such an incomparable glory and happiness, should become religious, but that their piety should arrive to a greater height of virtue by a perpetual contemplation of it. Christians, one would think, should love virtue more dearly, and be more entirely devoted to the study of it, now that it hath such a dowry, than any philosophers ever were, who loved it for itself, and thought it to be its own price and portion. And so they would, if they did not lay aside all consideration, and suffer the thoughts of eternal bliss to slip out of their minds.

It is a saying among the Jews, that when God first created man, his stature was so tall that he reached from heaven to earth, and could grasp all this world in his arms, as a very little thing. But *post peccatum Deus eum minuit ad centum cubitos*[d], 'after he sinned, God took him down to the height of an hundred cubits.' And still as men grew worse and worse, they sunk lower, till they dwindled away, as we see by ourselves, almost to nothing. The moral of it is very true. And if the Christian faith, like the breath of life wherewith

[d] [See the passages quoted for this Jewish tradition from the Rabbinical tract Baal Hatturim, from R. Solomon Jarchi on Gen. ii. 23; Deut. iv. 32, &c. by Hackspan, Expos. Cabbal. Jud. p. 315 sqq., and Sepher Cosri, part i. § 95. p. 52.]

God inspired man at the first, did thoroughly possess and renew our souls, we should grow up again to such an excellent pitch, as to be above all the earth, and tread it under our feet. At the very entrance of it, we should be inflamed with a most vehement desire and hope to grow till we be above the heavens, and made associates with the angels, and sit down with our blessed Saviour in his throne. And the lively hope of this will make us presently discharge ourselves of all those evil affections, which have degraded us and sunk us so low, that many men can scarce be discerned from the brutes that perish. They can speak, indeed, but that too is so sottishly unreasonable, as it only serves to proclaim into what a pitiful condition they are fallen. Out of which nothing but the Christian faith can raise us; which delivered the Gentile world from their idolatry, and purged their hearts, when they lay ἐν τῇ χύσει κακῶν, as Origen often speaks, 'in the most confused mixture of all filthiness and impurity.' It retains its virtue still, did we but enliven it by such affectionate considerations as these: which make us so ashamed to continue wallowing in the mire, that they will not suffer us to content ourselves with a mean degree of purity; *but as he which called us is holy, so* they press us to *be holy in all manner of conversation*[e].

V. And can any man now imagine there is no danger at all in resisting so mighty a motive as this to all well-doing? or that a man shall be no more miserable after his neglect of such great salvation, than he would have been if no such proposal had been made to him? Where have those men lived? what have they been thinking of all their days, into whose hearts such a belief can enter, that Christians may sin at as easy a rate as heathens? What, will despite done to such astonishing love of God to men, as is manifested to us, not at all inflame the reckoning? Can a man see the kingdom of heaven set open before his eyes, and offered to him; and after he hath so contemned it as to prefer a little of this world before it, be used as favourably in hell as if he had never heard of it? What doth our Saviour mean then when he saith, *It shall be more tolerable for Sodom and Gomorrah in the day of judgment*, than for those places where the gospel of God's

[e] 1 Pet. i. 15.

grace was preached? This very thing will make the fire more devouring, to think for what poor pleasures or gains they set at nought so stupendous a grace, and that withal they have lost those things for which they lost heaven. When they see how inconsiderable all their past delights were, it will make the madness seem greater, and the more distract and torment their enraged minds, to think how dear they now pay for them. The miserable soul will then continually pour upon itself the hottest and most scalding thoughts of its own gross stupidity and senseless negligence. It will flame with anger and burning wrath against itself for the frantic choice which it hath made; and rolling itself in the fire of its own fretful and impatient displeasure, will take such a furious revenge upon itself as to become its own dreadful executioner. In this misery it will lie frying for ever; *sibique perpetuum pabulum subministrabit*, 'and afford to itself perpetual fuel,' to keep alive the boiling rage and fierce displeasure it hath conceived against itself. The stings thereof will be sharper and more frequently returning than any pain, which we are now sensible of, can represent. The flashes of lightning are not so searching; and they will be as quick as the thoughts of a spirit. And what the hideous and doleful groans of a spirit are, we cannot tell; especially that lies under the load of this thought, that it might have been as happy as now it is miserable.

You may take a review of what was said in the beginning concerning *eternal life*, and by that make some judgment of the misery of those who are so unhappy as to lose it. They will be deprived of all that bliss which the souls and bodies of the just shall enjoy; and not be able to avoid the sorest pains, which even from thence will necessarily arise: for the greater you can suppose their knowledge of God to be in the other world, (which is the life of pious souls,) so much the greater will their sorrow and heaviness be to think that they have lost the favour of the Creator of the world, the fountain of all good. And when they behold the glory wherein the just appear with our blessed Lord, this will be a new grief to them, and most miserably afflict their hearts, whensoever they think what praise is given to those holy men whom they despised, in what glory they shine, and unto what dignity they are preferred; and on the other side consider their own shame and

reproach, and how vilely they lie under a perpetual curse, pronounced against them before angels and men, by the Lord of all.

And it will increase the torment, to consider that they are the cause of all this misery, which they have drawn upon themselves. Their negligence will come to mind, which gave no heed to the divine illuminations: their contumacy also, which resisted the divine motions: their horrid wickedness, into which they ran against the cries even of their own consciences. And these considerations they will not be able to avoid, nor put off the thoughts of the greatness of their misery. But they will stick close to them, and perpetually sting them; so that all their knowledge, which is so comfortable to others, will breed in them the most exquisite grief and sorrow. This our Saviour means by *outer darkness*, into which they shall be cast. From whence we may guess in what condition their wills and their affections must needs be: in which there will be no love of God at all; nothing, that we can conceive, but envy at the glory of the blessed; hatred of themselves, as the cause of all this mischief; vexation of heart to see how great it is; and desperation of seeing it grow less.

But I shall pursue it no further, because it would take up too much room in this discourse, which already begins to grow too big. I shall only add, that none knows what flames the breath of the Lord will kindle. The power of his anger is inconceivable, especially when incensed by the slighting of his love. And therefore what can we say of the dolours which *the fire that never goes out, and the worm that never dies*, when they meet together, will cause both in the souls and bodies of such contemptuous sinners? who will begin then to wish they had never been acquainted with the glad tidings of salvation; that so they might have lain in some more private corner of the miserable world, in a bed of softer and more gentle flames, and without that open disgrace to which they will be exposed. What an ease would they think it, if they might but have the favour to howl among the poor Indians, and shriek no louder than other wicked pagans; and have no worse devils to lash them than the lewd Mahometans, who never had a thought of any thing higher than a fleshly paradise! And yet the pagans themselves thought their condition would be bad enough if

they lived impiously; and that it was impossible to escape a just punishment in another world; as appears, among a number of other records, from that discourse I mentioned of Gobryas; who saith the first place men come into when they depart this life is πεδίον ἀληθείας, 'the field of truth.' So called, because there judges sit to examine how every one hath passed his life: and there is no way to evade their sentence by subterfuges or lies, (as his words are,) but they will dispose of all men with exact justice, according as they deserve. What they had some dark fancy of is now plainly and clearly revealed unto us; who are instructed, that *God hath appointed a day in the which he will judge the world in righteousness by that Man whom he hath ordained; whereof he hath given assurance unto all men, in that he hath raised him from the dead*[f]. And therefore we ought to be afraid of *treasuring up unto ourselves wrath against the day of wrath and revelation of the righteous judgment of God; who will render to every man according to his deeds: to them who by patient continuance in well-doing seek for glory, honour and immortality, eternal life: but unto them that are contentious, and do not obey the truth, but obey unrighteousness, indignation and wrath, tribulation and anguish, upon every soul of man that doeth evil, of the Jew* (we may say Christian) *first, and also of the Gentile*[g].

VI. Consider then, I beseech you once more, (which is all the questions I shall ask,) what you are now resolved to do. Will you put it to the venture, whether you be immortally happy or no? Is it true that Jesus lives, and is the Lord of all, and will give eternal life to his servants, worth more than all the pains they can take for it, but which cannot be won by trifling and careless endeavours; and yet offers itself graciously to those that will accept of it on most reasonable terms, which we cannot refuse without the greatest disrespect to God and danger to ourselves? Consider then, I beseech you, what is the wisest course for him to take that believes all this, and doth not think we have been all this time discoursing of a fiction. Is every man that reads these things resolved to become a new creature, and to say, as St. Paul did after he had seen our

[f] Acts xvii. 31. [g] Romans ii. 5–9.

Saviour, *Lord, what wouldst thou have me to do?* or as the Israelites, who beheld no such sights as are set before our eyes, *All that the Lord our God speaks to us, we will hear it and do it?*

O that there were such an heart, as it there follows, in every one of us, that we would mind these things, and no longer *neglect such great salvation!* For what will become of us, if, being thus convinced what we ought to do, we should put away this blessedness from us, and judge ourselves unworthy of eternal life? God forbid that we should be so wicked and so miserable. Shall such glorious things and so certain be proposed to us, and few or none regard them? A kingdom, a crown of glory lie before us, and we scornfully overlook it? Wo be to us, that the Father from heaven should speak so often and so loudly, and we not hearken to his voice! That the eternal Word should appear in glory, and we fools be taken more with fading beauties! That the Holy Ghost should descend from heaven, and the devil still carry all before him! That the Lord Jesus should shed his precious blood for us, and we not part with a vile affection! What is become of our wit? where do our souls dwell? or what company have they kept, that they are grown so void of all reason? Or do they think themselves so wise, that they have found something better than God, something more valuable than eternal life, and more certain too? When did the world get itself made so great a good? On what day was it that it engaged hereafter to be more constant to its friends? Where are the witnesses and the seal to this bond?

Ah wretched fools that we are, to let our souls be cheated so easily of such an happiness! or rather thus to impose upon ourselves with such weak and childish imaginations! Is any thing here grown so big, that we cannot see the disproportion between it and heaven? or is this world of such grand concern to us, that we cannot be at leisure to hear what our Saviour offers us? Have we no greater regard to these witnesses, than to suffer them to be baffled by every fleshly reasoning, though never so silly and inconsiderable? Let us bethink ourselves a little better. Let us do them so much right as to examine them impartially; and then if they deserve not belief, let the devil and the world take all. But if they declare beyond

all exception that Jesus is the Lord, and hath eternal life, and will bestow it on those that obey him, let us not be so bold as to slight him any longer; but go and humbly tender our hearts to him, and give him thanks that he will accept them. Is his yoke, think you, uneasy, and his burden too great a load? What was the load then which he carried, when all our sins were laid upon him! what a yoke was the cross itself, and all the indignities that he suffered! And yet *for the joy that was set before him* (and which he hath now set before us) he endured all with admirable patience. And indeed what can be too hard for him, who knows he labours for an infinite reward? Do we not all part with things very desirable for a small gain we are to get by the exchange? And how earnest, how fierce are we to drive on such a bargain! How contentedly can the tradesman lose his dinner on the market day, rather than lose a customer, by whom he hopes to gain a shilling! All the traffic in the world is carried on by giving one thing for another; and many times upon a little advantage. And therefore what makes us so unwilling to part with any thing in the world that God calls for, when he offers to give us goods of inestimable value in the room of it?

It is not a small portion that he assures us in his love, but he says we shall *inherit all things*, and that for ever. When we have served him threescore years and ten, (and who is there, alas! that serves him so much,) he doth not promise to settle on us an estate of so little as fourscore or an hundred years of incomparable happiness in the next world, (though we count it no mean bargain here to part with a lease of seventy years for one of eighty that is of equal value,) but more than so many ages, more than millions of lives, even an eternal life with himself in the heavens. Is there not a vast difference? Is not the disparity inconceivable between what we lay out and what we receive; and between the bargains we are so greedy of here, and this happy exchange which God offers us? Why then is it neglected, as if it were too dear at the rates on which it is proposed? Are we not willing to give so much for it? or is not the security good which God gives us for those heavenly possessions? Look over the evidences again which we have examined, and you will be ashamed to call them in question. And if you be satisfied, it will be a greater shame not to pursue

this gainful purchase with the same eagerness, care and diligence, that we do our several employments in this world. We ought to account that day best spent, not wherein we have got the most money, but wherein we have made some considerable improvement in true wisdom, and done some singular service to our Lord Jesus, who is our hope. And in all our external affairs let us exercise such justice, charity, thankfulness, and contented humility, that we may be able to say, if anybody ask us what we are doing, We work for eternity.

And that we may do so, and not, like Esau, sell our inheritance for a mess of pottage, (which will not be worth the tears it will cost us in this world, if ever we reflect upon our folly,) let us often cast our eyes upon this happiness, frequently meditate on the joy of our Lord, and study seriously those holy writings, wherein these precious promises are recorded. The Jews are so proud of their law, (which hath no such jewels in it neither,) that they fancy the angels contended with Moses about it, and would needs persuade him that it belonged to them[h]. I am sure St. Peter says, that those heavenly ministers have so great a value for the gospel, that *they desire to look into these things:* wondering that we Gentiles should be made, not only *fellow-citizens with the saints,* but equal to themselves. They rejoiced when they heard the good news, that our Lord was come down to men; and it seems he hath told us things beyond all their expectation. Shall not we then set a due esteem upon them, and look into them, and consider them, who have them so near unto us, and are so much concerned in them? Then it were better for us if we had no eyes, or if we lived in those places where no such things are to be seen: for none will be so miserable as they that might have been exceeding happy, and chose to remain miserable; and that when so few thoughts would have secured their happiness. For there is no way to be undone, but only by not believing, or not considering, the gospel of God's grace. Secure but these two passages, and strict piety will necessarily be our employment, and eternal life our reward. No temptation will be strong enough to make us neglect our work; and, I am sure, *faithful is he who hath promised,* and will not fail to pay us more than our wages.

[h] Pirke Eliezer, cap. xlvi. [p. 126.]

VI.

And what now remains, but to put those in mind who obediently believe in the Lord Jesus, what cause they have to entertain themselves beforehand with great joy in the comfortable expectation of God's mercy in him to eternal life? Let all his true-hearted disciples, who hear his voice, and follow him, rejoice; yet, let them be glad in him with exceeding joy. Let them say, O how great is the goodness of God! how rich are those blessings which he hath laid up for them that love him! how exceeding great and precious are the promises he hath made them! Our calling in Christ Jesus, how high is it! what is there nobler than his *kingdom and glory?* To which also he hath called us *by glory and virtue.* Heaven and earth concur in the most glorious and powerful manner to give us assurance, that it shall be well, exceeding well, with all those that love the Lord Jesus in sincerity.

Why should we suffer ourselves then to be dejected at any accident in this world which falls cross to us? Shall we take pet when any thing troubles us, and let our spirits die within us, who have such glorious hopes to live upon, and mightily support us? Jesus is alive: he is alive for evermore: and in him is eternal life for all his followers. The *Father,* the *Word,* the *Holy Ghost,* are come to comfort us with this joyful news. The *Water,* the *Blood,* and the *Spirit,* all say the same; and ask us why we are so sad, when life and immortality is brought to light by the gospel. It is the desire of the Lord Jesus that we would not mourn, as though he still lay in his grave, and could do nothing for us. He is certainly risen, and gone into the heavens; where God *hath made him exceeding glad with his countenance*[i]. And it will add to his joy, if it be capable of increase, to see us *rejoice with joy unspeakable and full of glory.* And therefore let us do him the honour to glory in his holy name: and let us say alway, *Blessed be the God and Father of our Lord Jesus Christ, which, according to his abundant mercy, hath begotten us again unto a lively hope by the resurrection of Jesus Christ from the dead, to an inheritance incorruptible, and undefiled, and that fadeth not away, reserved in heaven for us*[j].

[i] 1 Pet. i. 3, 4, 8. [j] [Ps. xxi. 6.]

We ought to say so with joyful hearts, even when death itself approaches; which of all other is the most frightful enemy of mankind, but is made our friend *by the appearing of our Saviour Jesus Christ, who hath abolished death, and hath brought life and immortality to light, through the gospel*[k]. Which hath *given us*, as the same apostle saith, such *everlasting consolation*, that it would be a great reproach to it to receive death timorously; which wise men, before our Saviour came, concluded might be, for any thing they knew, *πάντων μέγιστον τῶν ἀγαθῶν*, 'the greatest of all goods.' Our Lord assures us they were right in their conjectures; and hath made that certain, which Socrates[l] (whose words those are) left doubtful. And therefore we ought not to leave the world as if it were the greatest unhappiness that could befal us. "It is for him only to fear death (as St. Cyprian speaks) who would not go to Christ; and he only hath reason to be unwilling to go to Christ, who doth not believe he shall begin to reign with him[m]." This is the only thing (as he writes a little after) which makes men take death so heavily, *quia fides deest*, "because faith is wanting; because they do not believe those things are true, which he who is truth itself hath promised: but though they give credit to what a grave and laudable person promises, they are wavering about that which God saith, and receive it with an incredulous mind." For if they believed, they would entertain that which now seems dreadful, as St. Gregory Nazianzen says[n] that blessed martyr did; whose death he doubts whether he should call his departure from this life, or rather *πρὸς Θεὸν ἐκδημίαν, ἢ πόθου πλήρωσιν*, 'his departure to God, or the fulfilling of his desire.' And thus (if we may believe Chalcidius) the famous Trismegistus died, saying to his son, that stood by him, "My son, hitherto I have lived an exile from my country; but now I am going safe thither. And therefore when, a little while hence, I shall be freed from the chain of this body, see that you do not bewail me as if I was dead. For I am only returning to that most excellent blessed city, whither the citizens cannot arrive unless they take death in their way. There God only is the governor-in-chief, who entertains his citizens with a

[k] 2 Tim. i. 10.

[l] Plato, Apolog. Socr. [p. 40.]

[m] L. de Mortalitate, p. 208. [p. 157. ed. Fell.]

[n] Orat. 18. p. 284. [ed. Ben. orat. xxiv. § 17. tom. i. p. 448 B.]

marvellous sweetness; in comparison with which, that which we now call life is rather to be termed death[o]."

And what if, in our passage to it, we should fall into divers temptations, or trials of our sincere affection to the Lord Jesus? There is no reason that this should dishearten us, and deaden our spirits: for it is the singular privilege of a Christian to *rejoice in the Lord alway*[p], especially when he suffers for righteousness' sake. In that case the apostles thought it an honour that they were *counted worthy* to be beaten, and *suffer shame for his name*[q]. And St. James thought their example was not unimitable by other Christians, to whom he saith, *My brethren, count it all joy when ye fall into divers temptations*[r]. And so they did, as you read in the Epistle to the Christian Hebrews; of whom the apostle gives this testimony: *Ye took joyfully the spoiling of your goods, knowing in yourselves that you have in heaven a better and enduring substance*[s]. This consideration made them look upon the rapine which the seditious people committed in their houses, without that dejection which on such occasions appears in other countenances. And yet they were men like ourselves, who *walked by faith, and not by sight*[t]; that is, did not enjoy the thing itself which they expected. And therefore what should hinder the same effect in our hearts, if we believe as they did?

And to show the mighty power of this heavenly principle, these three things may be here pertinently noted, out of the records they have left us of their spirit in all their sufferings.

I. And first, I find, that when the heaviest cross lay upon them, the sense they had of things to come supported them under it with admirable resolution. This was the least effect of their holy faith; which made them, when the hearts of others sunk under the load, and fell down, as we say, into their knees, stand like a strong pillar, which bears up the whole weight of the house, and never yield at all. The thoughts of what our Lord had promised not only preserved them from murmuring and repining at their present condition, (knowing what good provision he had made for them hereafter,) but from fainting,

[o] Fr. Archangel. Dogm. Cabbalistica. [p. 743. inter Scriptores Artis Cabbalisticæ, per J. Pistorium.]

[p] Phil. iv. 4.

[q] Acts v. 41.

[r] James i. 2.

[s] Heb. x. 34.

[t] 2 Cor. v. 7.

and being sluggish in their ministry. *For which cause we faint not*, or do not grow lazy, saith St. Paul: (*knowing*, that is, *that he who raised up the Lord Jesus would raise up them also:*) *for though our outward man perish*, (or wear away,) *yet the inward man is renewed* (or grows more youthful) *day by day*[u]. And (2) this faith also preserved them from swounding *fear*, either of disgrace, or pain, or death; being *in nothing terrified by their adversaries*, saith the same apostle[x]: who, seeing them undaunted under all their sufferings, had reason to look upon this as *an evident token of their perdition*, and of the *salvation* God would give to these his valiant champions. And (3) from sorrowing also, and lamenting the loss of any thing; because this good, they found, was still secure[y]. Which made them, as he there saith again, to be always full of joy, though in the eye of the world they looked very sorrowfully. And so (lastly) they kept their steadfastness, and turned not away from the holy commandment delivered unto them. Whereby they marvellously promoted Christianity: *and the God of all grace, who hath called us unto his eternal glory by Christ Jesus, after that they had suffered a while, made them perfect, stablished, strengthened, settled them*[z].

II. But the hope of eternal life did not merely *support* and uphold their spirits; it wonderfully *refreshed and comforted* them in all their afflictions: so that they durst confidently promise to all other suffering Christians the same heavenly comforts from God. *Who comforteth us* (saith St. Paul) *in all our tribulation, that we may be able to comfort them which are in any trouble, by the comfort wherewith we ourselves are comforted of God. And our hope of you is steadfast, knowing that as you are partakers of the sufferings, so shall ye be also of the consolation*[a]. Their comfort and rejoicing was the testimony of their conscience, that every where they acted sincerely[b]; and that they served a good Master, who had promised them better fare in the next world, where he reigns in full power and glory. His kingdom, they knew, was not of this world, even as he was not of the world; and therefore they did not expect he should give them a portion of good things

[u] 2 Cor. iv. 14, 16. [x] Phil. i. 28. [y] 2 Cor. vi. 10. [z] 1 Pet. v. 10.
[a] 2 Cor. i. 4, 7. [b] Ver. 12.

here. No; he told them plainly, *in the world ye shall have tribulation;* but adds in the same breath, *be of good cheer, I have overcome the world*[c].

III. Which victory of his over death and the grave encouraged them to follow him in all their tribulations, not merely with simple *comfort*, but with *joy*, as I have observed already, and more than that, made them *exceeding glad*, and even *shout for joy*. So our Saviour himself required them to do when they were reviled and persecuted for his name sake. *Rejoice, and be exceeding glad: for great is your reward in heaven*[d]. And so they did, as St. Paul tells us[e]: *We rejoice in hope of the glory of God; and not only so, but we glory in tribulations also.* For they had this *strong consolation*, as the divine writer to the Hebrews calls it: first, that nothing, either in this world or the other, could take away that heavenly good from them. As St. Paul also testifies in that triumph of his[f], *I am persuaded, that neither death, nor life, nor angels, nor principalities, nor powers, nor things present, nor things to come, nor height, nor depth, nor any other creature, shall be able to separate us from the love of God which is in Christ Jesus our Lord.* When their goods were taken away, they could make their boast in Christ, and say, Our inheritance is immovable: when they were driven from house and home, (as we speak,) they could triumph, and say, *Our house is eternal in the heavens*, from which none can exclude us: when they were in pain, they still remembered our Saviour's own words, *Your joy shall no man take from you.* In death itself they could glory, and say, *Jesus, our life*, dies not; and *because he lives, we shall live also.* And (2) as they knew they could not lose their future happiness, so they knew it to be incomparably greater than all their sufferings. *For I reckon, that the sufferings of this present time are not worthy to be compared with the glory which shall be revealed in us*[g]. *For our light affliction, which is but for a moment, worketh for us as a far more exceeding and eternal weight of glory*[h]. Where there is a third reason of their exceeding great joy; because these afflictions, which they endured for Christ's sake, would increase their glory hereafter, and make their crown

[c] John xvi. 33. [d] Matt. v. 12. [e] Rom. v. 2, 3. [f] Rom. viii. 38, 39. [g] Rom. viii. 18. [h] 2 Cor. iv. 17.

beyond all expression heavier. And more than that, (4) hereby not only their present afflictions were alleviated and seemed trivial, but they gave them a clearer sight of that most excellent glory beforehand: *while they looked not* (as it there follows[i]) *at the things which are seen, but at the things which are not seen.* The removal of these things here below from before their eyes fixed them more steadfastly on the invisible world. Now *their joy was full*, as our Saviour speaks, John xvi. 24, now it overflowed; when all things else had forsaken them, and nothing else but those unseen enjoyments remained to comfort them. This heavenly glory shone brightest in the dark and horrible pit: where their afflictions brought them sweeter contentment than ever was the fruit of any earthly pleasure. And so we may still hope, that when other things, by any calamity in this world, stand afar off, and can do nothing for us, there will be the more room for the thoughts and sense of this future bliss to spread itself, and fill the whole capacity of pious hearts. Then they will be most at leisure; then invisible things will seem most real; then they will most strongly affect the heart: so that they will not be the worse for their afflictions, but the better; and their pains will but bring them the sooner to heavenly joys.

And should not our faith work thus mightily in our hearts, at least supporting us with true satisfaction under all our troubles, it would be an exceeding great shame to us; when we consider with what resolution, courage, and cheerfulness they, whose knowledge of heavenly things was darker than ours, received the most dreadful sufferings, even death itself, before the coming of our Saviour. The mother and her seven sons, whose story is recorded in the second book of the Maccabees[k], are a famous instance of this; who, in hope of a blessed resurrection, when the belief of it stood on a feebler foundation than ours, offered themselves to the sharpest torments rather than break the law of their Creator. "Neither the strapado, nor the wheel to rack their joints, nor hooks of iron to tear their flesh, nor the fury of wild beasts, nor boiling caldrons, nor the fiercest fires, no evil present, no evil to come, could move the hearts of these young men, who were in their

[i] 2 Cor. iv. 18. [k] Chap. vii.

flourishing years, or make them yield a jot to the wicked tyrant, who would have had them transgress the ordinances of Moses." They are the words of that great man, St. Greg. Nazianzen[1], who hath admirably summed up their speeches, in an oration of his which he made in their commendation; where he proceeds in this manner: "One of the brethren spoke in one fashion, and the rest in another, according as the words of the tyrant, or the order of their sufferings, gave occasion. But to comprise all in a little compass, this was the substance of what they said: O king Antiochus, and all you that are here present, be it known unto you that we have one King, even God Almighty, from whom we come, and unto whom we must return. And we have one lawgiver, Moses, whom we will never betray nor reproach, though another Antiochus, more fierce and severe than thou, should threaten us. Μία ἀσφάλεια, τῆς ἐντολῆς ἡ τήρησις, 'Our only security is, to keep the commandment;' and not to break the law whereby we are guarded. Our only glory is, for such great things to despise all glory beside. Our only riches are, the hopes we have hereafter. Our only fear, lest we should fear any thing more than God. With these reasons we now come armed into the field of danger. We are but young, it is true, and this world is sweet; our native country, our friends, our kindred, our dear companions, invite us to stay with them; but none of them are so sweet as God, none so dear as those very dangers which we expose ourselves unto for virtue's sake. Harbour no such thoughts, we humbly beseech you, for there is another world also which expects us, more lofty and durable by far than all that we behold in this. Jerusalem that is above is our country; which no Antiochus can besiege, no power on earth can touch or endanger. All those that are born of God are our kindred; the prophets and patriarchs our friends, from whom we have received a pattern of piety. And our companions are all those who hazard themselves with us this day, and are our contemporaries in constant suffering. Heaven is more glorious than our temple itself: the quire of angels infinitely beyond our solemn assemblies: and there is one great

[1] Orat. xii. *εἰς Μακκαβαίους*, p. 401, &c. [ed. Ben. Orat. xv. tom. i. p. 289 sqq.]

mystery, God himself, whom all our sacred mysteries here respect. And therefore cease to make us any more offers and promises of little things, which are nothing worth. We love not those shameful honours which we shall get by denying God. We were not bred to make such unthrifty bargains, and cannot traffic with thee on such base and ignoble terms: and therefore cease also to threaten us; or we can return more dreadful threatenings, which will reprove thy weakness. For know that we have a fire, into which to throw our persecutors. Dost thou think thou hast to do with gentile people? Those, it is true, thou hast overcome: they have yielded to thy threatenings and power: and no wonder; for they did not fight for such glorious things as we. They only defended their cities and goods; but we defend the law of the Most High. Thou opposest thyself now against the tables writ with the finger of God; against the most holy and divine service; against the rites of our country, which reason and time have made honourable; against seven brethren, who are linked together by one soul; whom it is no such mighty business to overcome, but to be worsted by them will be most shameful. And, be assured, we will set up seven monuments of thy disgrace; for we are the progeny and disciples of those who were led by a pillar of fire and a cloud; to whom the sea parted itself, and the sun stood still, and bread rained down from heaven; and who triumphed over mighty kings by prayer and lifting up their hands to heaven. And to say something that comes within the compass of thy knowledge, we are bred up under Eleazar, whose fortitude and courage thou art not ignorant of. The father led the way; the sons follow him to the like combat. Therefore it is to no purpose to add any more threatenings: we can suffer greater things than those thou speakest of. Οὐδὲν ἰσχυρότερον τῶν πάντα παθεῖν ἑτοίμων· 'There are none more valiant than they that are ready to endure all things.' Why do you delay to begin your cruelty? what do you stay for, or expect? Do you think we may change our minds, and recant? No; we protest again and again, we will never eat impure flesh: we will never break the law of our God. Thou shalt sooner turn to our religion than we to thine. Let hotter fires be kindled; let more ravenous beasts be brought forth; let more exquisite torments

be invented: in short, either devise some new punishment, or know that we despise these that are before us.

"These," saith he, "were their words to the tyrant; in the relation of which I am wonderfully delighted. And then embracing and kissing one another, with no less cheerfulness than if they had been come to receive their reward, Let us go, said they with a loud voice, let us go to meet these dangers. Let us make haste, while the tyrant is hot and chafes, lest he be cool again, and we lose the salvation. What though it cost us our lives? must not we leave them some time or other? must we not pay the debt we owe to nature? Let us convert then a necessity into our choice and a glory. Let us deceive the grave; and make that peculiar which is common. By death let us make a purchase of life. Let none of us faint in our undertaking, nor be desirous to live here any longer. Let us make the tyrant despair of moving others, by seeing our constancy. Let him appoint our sufferings, we will put an end to them. Let us make it appear that as we are brethren by birth, so we are in all things else, not excepting death."

Such was the resolution, saith he, of these men; who did not serve pleasure, nor suffered themselves to be governed by their passions, but purified their bodies and their spirits, and in this manner were translated εἰς τὴν ἀπαθῆ ζωὴν, 'to that life which is incapable of any passion,' and free from all the troubles and miseries to which here we are exposed. It would be too long to relate the speech of the mother; who likewise gave an illustrious testimony of her faith in God, and hath left a rare example to all posterity of constancy and patience under the greatest sufferings. The apostle himself hath perpetuated their memory in his Epistle to the Hebrews, and made it sacred to all generations: where it will stand to our great confusion if we should not learn of those who had so great a faith under so a dark revelation. What would not these persons have done, saith the forenamed father, if they had lived in our times, who were so courageous before the sufferings of Christ, and the glory (I may add) that followed after? If without example they behaved themselves so undauntedly, what rare souls would they have been with one, especially with the example of Christ Jesus! Such we ought to strive to be, not only as they were, but as we conceive they would have been

under our Master: *strengthened*. I mean, as St. Paul speaks, *with all might according to his glorious power, unto all patience and long-suffering with joyfulness; giving thanks unto the Father, which hath made us meet to be partakers of the inheritance of the saints in light*[m]. And so we shall, if the same spirit of faith be in us that was in them. For it tells us how Jesus went this way to heaven; and that if we overcome, we shall shine with him in his glory, and sit down with him in his throne, and inherit all things.

There need no more be said to encourage even those Christians who have been most delicately bred, or that are of the tenderer sex, to wade through the greatest difficulties. Let them but look up unto Jesus, and he will inflame them with such ardent love, that they will be glad to follow him to his cross, if they must go that way to come where he is. This moved Dorotheus and divers other courtiers, (who, as Eusebius[n] reports, were βασιλικοὶ παῖδες, of the emperor's bedchamber, and in such high favour, that they were no less beloved than if they had been the emperor's own children,) to prefer the reproaches and pains of piety, and the new-devised deaths they were to suffer for its sake, before all the glory and delights wherein they lived. And St. Peter, we are told by Clemens Alexandrinus[o], seeing his own wife led to death, rejoiced at the grace to which she was called, thinking now she was upon her return home. And cheerfully exhorting her to proceed to the execution, he called her by her name, saying only these few words, Μεμνήσθω τοῦ Κυρίου· 'Remember the Lord.' That was sufficient, he knew, to make her constant and courageous: it being *a faithful saying*, (an undoubted principle of Christianity, on which we may ever safely build,) *For if we be dead with him, we shall also live with him: if we suffer with him, we shall also reign with him*[p]. And it was no less steadfastly believed, that they who suffered with him should also reign with him in a greater glory than others; as we heard before from St. Paul, who saith, their afflictions would work for them a most ponderous crown of glory. Nay, they gave the like encouragement to all those who did any

[m] Col. i. 11, 12. [n] Lib. viii. Eccles. Histor. c. 6. [p. 382.]
[o] Lib. vii. Stromat. p. 756. [p. 869. ed. Potter.] [p] 2 Tim. ii. 11, 12.

eminent service to our blessed Lord. They that *laboured hard*, for instance, *in the word and doctrine*, St. Paul saith, *were worthy of double honour*, or reward in this world[q]. Which few receiving, (but quite contrary, they were least esteemed, as he himself found by experience, who took the most pains,) there was the greater reason to hope to find it in another life; when the *chief Shepherd appearing*, they were sure to receive *an excellent crown of glory*[r]. To every saint our Lord promises a *crown of glory:* (as those crowns were wont to be called that they used in times of greatest joy:) the word ἀμαράντινον added to it (which is never used in any other place of Scripture, and is that whereby some of the crowns given to persons of desert in other nations are called) denotes, I think, something extraordinary in the glory of those good shepherds, who fed the flock of God according to the directions the apostle had been giving them.

The martyrs, we are sure, expected it; who building on this foundation, that they *who suffer with him shall reign with him*, gave God thanks when they received the sentence of death; and went to the execution singing, and expired with hymns in their mouths, and exhorted others, in the midst of their torments, to the like cheerful constancy. Of all which I could produce instances out of the ecclesiastical story; but I shall only set down that of Liberatus and his monks: who, defending the Christian faith against the heresy of Arius, when they were condemned to be thrown bound into a ship full of faggots, and there to be burnt in the midst of the sea, sang aloud this hymn: '*Glory be to God in the highest. Behold, now is the acceptable time: behold, now is the day of salvation:* in which we suffer punishment for the faith of our God[s].'

And why should not this faith much more easily comfort us against the death of our dearest friends, when we can reasonably hope they depart from us to go into the eternal happiness of a better world? Their gain is so great which they have made by the exchange, that we ought not so heavily, as we are wont, to take our own loss. This Photius represents

[q] 1 Tim. v. 17. [r] 1 Pet. v. 4. [s] Victor Uticensis, Vandal. Persec. [lib. v. tom. viii. p. 698 D. Max. Bibl. Vet. Patr.]

very handsomely to his brother Tarasius; after he had said a great many other things, to stop the tears that he shed immoderately for a daughter who was dead. "Suppose," saith he, "thy daughter should appear to thee, and, taking thee by the hand, should kiss it with a cheerful and smiling countenance, saying, My father, why dost thou afflict thyself in this manner? why dost thou bemoan me, as if I was gone to an evil condition? My lot is fallen unto me in Paradise; a place most sweet to behold, and far sweeter to enjoy: μείζω δὲ πίστεως ἁπάσης ἡ πεῖρα, 'but the experiment exceeds all belief.' Into this the crooked serpent cannot wind himself, as he did into that of our forefathers; nor so much as whisper any of his deceitful temptations. There is none among us but whose mind is impregnable, and cannot be overcome by any artifice; nor can we desire to be gratified with any greater good. For we are all of us wise with the divine and heavenly wisdom; and our whole life is a continued magnificent festival, in the enjoyment of infinite and unspeakable goods. Splendidly clothed, we see God in a splendid manner, (as far as man can see him;) and ravished with his inexplicable, inconceivable beauty, we rejoice alway, and are never weary. Which abundant pleasure is the very perfection of love; and the power of enjoying accompanying love begets that ineffable joy and exultation of spirit. So that now, while I converse with thee, a most mighty love to those things draws me away, and suffers me not to expound the least part of them. Thou and my dear mother shall one day come thither, and then confess I have said but very little of such great goods; but accuse thyself very much for bewailing me, who happily enjoy them. Therefore, my dearest father, let me go away with joy, and do not detain me any longer, lest thou suffer a greater loss, and for that be more bitterly afflicted.

"If thy daughter, I say, could after this or the like sort speak to thee, wouldst thou not be ashamed to continue thy lamentations? and choose rather with joy to let her go away rejoicing? Consider then, if upon a child's saying such things, we should presently grow better, and be of good comfort; shall we, when our common Creator and Lord cries, *He that believeth in me, though he die, yet shall he live;* and, *God hath prepared for them that love him such things as eye hath not*

seen, nor ear heard, neither have they entered into the heart of man, be nothing better for such joyful tidings, but, like infidels, go on still to increase our sad lamentations[t]?"

We cannot answer this question any other way but by silence; or rather, cheerful thanksgivings to God, who hath given us such *everlasting consolation, and good hope through his grace,* as may well enable us to say in every other troublesome condition, *Why art thou* thus *cast down, O my soul? why art thou disquieted within me? Hope in God,* and rejoice in his holy name, who, thanks be to his goodness, *giveth us the victory, through our Lord Jesus Christ.* Let us shake hands with grief, sadness, and sorrow; and leave them to those who have no hope of eternal life. Let us make our boast in the Lord, and say, *that he is good, for his mercy endureth for ever.* Come, my soul, what is it that afflicts thee? Will not the thoughts of the joys of heaven give thee ease, nay perfectly cure thee? Will not a sight of Jesus, sitting on the throne of his glory, revive thee? It is but a moment or two, and we shall be with him where he is. Let us have patience for a few days more of banishment from our heavenly country. Hold out, my soul, for a short pilgrimage, and we shall arrive at our promised inheritance. Shall we bemoan ourselves thus miserably, for whom our God hath made such gracious provision? Shall we be weary, who want but a few steps and we are at our eternal rest? Behold, behold thy Saviour: yonder he is: I see him shining in his celestial glory. He looks upon me, methinks, and saith, Be of good cheer, for I am preparing a place for thee.

Do we not forget, O my soul, that Jesus is so highly advanced, when we suffer ourselves to be thus cast down and sadly dejected? Do we not reproach his memory, and in effect say too grossly, He is dead, he is not risen; who can choose but mourn and be sorrowful? For shame let us stay our tears till the testimonies we have heard can be disproved, till it appear that Jesus is still in his grave, and these are six false witnesses which stand up for him. But in the mean time let us rejoice that they never yet could be confuted, but have borne down all the opposition of the world and the devil for

[t] Epist. ccxxxii. [p. 352, 3.]

more than sixteen hundred years, to the eternal honour of Jesus.

O sweet name! why do we dishonour it with sour faces and sad countenances, and a melancholic life? If he live, sure he will be as good as his word, that we shall live also. Let us never forget those words of grace, *Because I live, ye shall live also;* and let us never remember them but with new delight. Let it delight us to repeat them a thousand times in a day. As long as we live, let us comfort ourselves with this; Our Lord hath said, *Because I live, ye shall live also.* Doth it not fill a merchant's heart with joy to hear that his ship is arrived at a safe port, though many leagues from his own house? Doth not the countryman look brisk when his seed-time is good, though he must wait many weeks before he reap his desired harvest? Let not us then be the only lumpish insensible things, who hear the joyful news that Jesus is alive, and safely arrived at our Father's house, where there are many mansions. Let us not be so stupid as to be discontented, who have his word for it that we shall live with him: but let us rejoice, and say as the Psalmist doth, (we have more reason for it,) *In God will I praise his word: in the Lord will I praise his word. In him have I put my trust: I will not be afraid what man,* or any thing else, *can do unto me*[u]. Jesus hath said I shall live: I will depend on his word; and expect, after all my tossings up and down in this troublesome world, to land shortly in the Paradise of God.

Paradise! O that comfortable word! that sweetest of all words! What should we not have given to hear of any hopes of it, if God had not promised it? And shall we now make light account of it? God forbid. We will not sigh at the thoughts of death itself, seeing it is but the gate of Paradise: we will look upon it with a smile, and say it is welcome: we will tell it that it is a long-looked-for friend, and bid it do its office, and make way for our entrance into the place that Jesus hath prepared for us. What though we have not much acquaintance with that world? what though it be a place where we never were, and from whence no friend that is gone thither hath returned to tell us what it is? Jesus knew it very well, (that is enough,) else he would not have endured so much for

[u] Psalm lvi. 10, 11.

it: he is perfectly acquainted with it; for from thence he came, and there he is. And therefore let us not be timorous when we think of removing to a strange country, but confidently rely on his knowledge more than our own. Let us remember the words of these witnesses, which say, *He is the Son of God, in whom is eternal life.* Let us trust his judgment, who thought it more desirable to go away, though upon a cross, than to stay here in the greatest pleasure. And since all these witnesses say he is in heaven, let us resolve that we will die looking up to him, and saying,

Lord, remember it is the will of the Father that we should have everlasting life. Thou thyself appearedst to St. Stephen, and madest him confident thou wilt receive our spirit. The Holy Ghost, which is the Spirit of truth, saith thou art glorified, and wilt glorify us with thyself. This thou hast preached to us: this thy blood hath purchased for us: this thou didst rise again to prepare against our coming to thee: this thy holy apostles say thou sentest them to publish to the world: this thou hast made us believe, and wait for, and suffer for, and long to enjoy. O dearest Lord, and most merciful Saviour, who art the *true and faithful Witness,* though we miserable sinners deserve to be denied, yet deny not thyself: let not the price of thy precious blood be lost; let not the word of the Father, of the Holy Ghost, thine own word, fail. If thou art not alive, I am content to perish; but if thou art, as thou hast persuaded me, then I will not cease to call upon thee; I will die with these words in my mouth, and be confident thou wilt hear me, *Lord Jesus, receive my spirit.*

Thus the blessed martyr St. Stephen expired, looking up steadfastly unto *Jesus, the author and finisher of our faith,* who then appeared in glory to him: whose example all the rest of that noble army followed, triumphing over death in an assured hope of immortal life. Which they had not the least doubt of, it is manifest from hence, that (as Clemens Alexandrinus observes [v]) ἐν αὐταῖς τῶν κολάσεων ταῖς ἀκμαῖς εὐχαριστοῦσι τῷ Θεῷ, 'in the very extremity of their torments they gave thanks to God,' who they knew would reward their fidelity, having in this very way consecrated Jesus to the highest office, of being *the finisher* or crowner *of our faith.* Therefore

[v] Lib. vii. Stromat. p. 756. [p. 869. ed. Potter.]

their heart was glad, and their glory rejoiced; and they sang cheerfully, with the holy Psalmist, but with a far greater confidence, *God shall redeem my soul from the power of the grave, for he shall receive me*[x].

"And, O thou Lord and Creator of all things, especially of this thy workmanship! O thou God and Father of thy men! O thou Lord of life and death! O thou Benefactor of souls, and Dispenser of all good things! O thou who didst form all things, and in due time, thou best knowest how, in the depth of thy wisdom and administration, wilt transform us, by that divine Artificer, the *Word!* receive me also hereafter, when thou seest most convenient; in the mean time governing me in this flesh as long as it will be profitable. And receive me in thy fear, prepared, not disturbed, nor hanging back at the last day, and dragged by force from hence, (like the lovers of the world and the flesh,) but cheerfully and willingly, unto that everlasting and blessed life which is in Christ Jesus our Lord[y]."

"And, O thou *Word* of God! thou Light! thou Life, and Wisdom, and Power! (for I delight in all thy names;) O thou Offspring and Image of that great Mind! O intellectual Word, and visible Man, who upholdest all things by the word of thy power! May it now please thee to accept of this book, (though not the firstfruits, yet the last perhaps that I may be able to offer thee,) both as a grateful acknowledgment for all thy benefits, and an humble supplication that I may have no other troubles beside the necessary sacred ones of my charge. Stop the fury of any disease which may seize on me; or thy sentence, if I be removed by thee. And if thou art pleased to grant me a dissolution according to my desire, and I be received into the heavenly tabernacles, there I hope to offer acceptable sacrifices to thee at thy holy altar, O Father, and Word, and Holy Ghost: for to thee belongs all glory, honour, and dominion, for ever and ever. Amen[z]."

[x] Psalm xlix. 15.

[y] Greg. Naz. Orat. x. in Cæsarium fratrem, p. 176. [ed. Ben. Orat. vii. § 24. tom. i. p. 215, 6.]

[z] Id. Orat. xlii. *εἰς τὸ ἅγιον Πάσχα*, p. 696. [ed. Ben. Orat. xlv. § 30. tom. i. p. 868.]

THE

GLORIOUS EPIPHANY,

WITH

THE DEVOUT CHRISTIAN'S LOVE TO IT.

REV, XXII. 20.

COME, LORD JESUS.

Ἡ Καθολικὴ καὶ τελευταία Καθαίρεσις, εὐχῆς ἔργον ἐστὶν ἡμῶν.

St. Chrysostom [Hom. de Resurrectione,] tom. vi. p. 709.
[ed. Savill., sed in ed. Ben. tom. ii. p. 431 B.]

IMPRIMATUR

Hic Liber cui titulus The Glorious Epiphany, &c.

Geo. Thorp, Reverendissimo in Christo Patri et Dⁿᵒ, Dⁿᵒ Gulielmo Archiep. Cantuar. a Sacris Domesticis.

April 30, 1678.

TO

THE MOST REVEREND FATHER IN GOD

WILLIAM,

BY DIVINE PROVIDENCE

LORD ARCHBISHOP OF CANTERBURY,

PRIMATE AND METROPOLITAN OF ALL ENGLAND; AND ONE OF HIS MAJESTY'S MOST HONOURABLE PRIVY COUNCIL.

HAVING composed a treatise, most reverend Father, concerning the appearing of the chief Shepherd of our souls (whom we look for from heaven at the last day), I know not to whom more properly to address it than to your Grace; whom our Lord hath been pleased to entrust with the high office of presiding in chief over that part of his flock which he hath gathered within the fold of this kingdom. A charge of which, as your Grace was not in the least ambitious, so all judged you highly worthy; and may well look upon it as a token God hath still some kindness for this church (which hath been so long miserably distracted and torn in pieces by many sects and different factions), that he hath been pleased to guide his Majesty to the choice of a person so rarely qualified, both with piety and prudence, with uprightness and inflexible virtue, as well as with learning and other accomplishments, to be the prime pastor of it.

This I am sure makes some good men hope that he intends still to *feed us in our green pastures, and to lead us forth beside the waters of comfort*[a]; and hath moved me to take the humble boldness (among the crowds who come upon that errand) of approaching your Grace in this manner, to congratulate to your Grace that singular honour, and to the church that great happiness.

[a] [Psalm xxiii. 2.]

For the continuance of which, as we ought to pray most ardently, so to do our duties faithfully in our several stations: and to grow in grace, and in the knowledge of our Lord and Saviour Jesus Christ, wherewith in this church we are fed so constantly, and so abundantly replenished. Unto which as nothing can more effectually excite us than the serious contemplation of his appearing again to give salvation to all the faithful; and especially to bestow upon all faithful pastors (who as St. Peter speaks, *feed his flock* [b] willingly, and are examples to it), a crown of glory that fadeth not away; so I hope I have done something in this treatise to draw the thoughts and the affections of those who piously peruse it to so lovely a spectacle.

Of this your Grace is so good a judge, that it was a principal motive to my confidence in this dedication. For next to the pleasure of composing such a work, is the satisfaction of addressing it to a patron no less pious than knowing; who hath accustomed himself to devout meditations, and feels in his own breast the same holy motions which he sees and loves in another. This was a reflection wherewith that great man St. Hierome was much delighted, when he was writing his Commentaries upon the prophet Isaiah. In whose words I may more fitly end this preface to your Grace, than he begins one of his (upon the sixteenth book) unto Eustochium [c]: "It is an excellent sentence of the most eloquent orator, that 'arts would be happy, if none did judge of them but only artists.' And lest I should seem to borrow an example only from profane writers, this is the very thing which the prophet represents in other words, *Blessed is he that speaketh in the ears of them that hearken.*"

They are the words, I find, of the son of Sirach [d], whom he calls a prophet only in a large sense, (for in his famous *Prologus Galeatus* [e] he strikes this book out of the canon of the Scripture,) because he had an excellent faculty to comprise in a few words many profitable instructions. Amongst which St. Hierome seasonably called this to mind, (as he was writing upon the scriptures, to one that loved them, and was well versed in them,) which is one of the ten things there mentioned by that wise man, whereby he thought he might be made completely happy.

And of this happiness (to speak still in the words of that Father) your Grace hath made us partakers: having a palate to taste what is devout, as well as to discern what is learned and judicious. To the latter I do not pretend; but hope there is something of the

[b] [1 Pet. v. 2.] [c] [tom. iv. col. 665.] [d] Ecclus. xxv. 9.
[e] [Præfat. in libros Samuel et Malachim, tom. ix. col. 457.]

former, which will recommend this work to your Grace's good liking, and make it acceptable likewise to *all those that love our Lord Jesus in sincerity.*

To whose powerful protection and guidance I most humbly commend your Grace; beseeching him to strengthen you to sustain the burden of so weighty a charge, and to inspire you with all the prudence, resolution and zeal, which are necessary in these difficult times: that by your Grace's wise conduct, God's true religion may be so settled and firmly established among us, and sincere piety, together with Christian learning and knowledge, so thrive and prosper everywhere; that this church (as St. Paul speaks of that of Thessalonica) may be *your joy and glory, and crown of rejoicing, before our Lord Jesus Christ, at his coming.*

Which is and shall be the prayer of,

My Lord,

Your Grace's most humble and dutiful servant,

SYMON PATRICK.

TO

THE DEVOUT READERS.

So adorable, as Tertullian speaks [f], is the fulness of the Holy Scriptures, that the more we search into them, the greater treasures of Divine wisdom we discover there to employ our meditations: and when we think we have found out all that belongs to one subject, new things present themselves to fill us with greater joy and admiration. It is not long since I sent abroad so large a treatise of that *Eternal Life* which Christ hath promised, that it seemed to comprehend all that the holy books have delivered in that argument: but upon further thoughts, I find there is one most comfortable consideration still remains, which is the subject of this present Treatise. Wherein I have endeavoured to represent what a joy it will be to see our Lord himself come again from heaven, attended with his holy angels, to fetch us up thither to live with him for ever: and what a passion we should now have for him, and for his coming; whereby we should run to meet him, and receive beforehand some glimpses of that glory wherein he will appear, and we together with him.

The greatness of that bliss we shall then receive ought no doubt to be the frequent subject of our serious meditation. Which will be the greater (as I have said in another place) because we must stay so long for it as till the day of Christ's appearing. And it is a singular comfort, we must confess, to know that it will be so exceeding great; though that very thing cannot but make us the more desirous he would be pleased to hasten it. For whatsoever joy we shall have before that time, (as no question the paradise into which our Lord entered immediately after his death, before he was crowned with glory and honour, was a place of very much happiness,) it will not be completed till he come again to bring us that great salvation which the Scripture speaks of at the resurrection of the dead.

When we are at rest from our labours in the other world, I cannot but think we shall long for that happy day; and that it will be

[f] ["Adoro scripturæ plenitudinem," &c. Adv. Hermog. cap. 22. p. 241 D.]

part of our joy to expect it, with perfect assurance of its coming. And therefore it cannot but be a very delightful entertainment, to think of it, to hope and wish for it now, as the greatest refreshment we have of our labours here in this life. For while our thoughts and desires are thus employed, we tread, if I may so speak, upon the threshold of paradise, and begin to enter into the joy of our Lord.

But there is one expression of St. Paul which I mentioned in the conclusion of the second Advice to a Friend, (p. 64.g) which excels all the rest: for he makes it the proper mark of a Christian to *love his appearing*. Which I have undertaken therefore to explain in this discourse, that devout Christians may know what the blessedness of that time will be, and what the affection is we should have for it, and what reason there is we should be so affected towards it. The subject is so unusual, that I have not seen it anywhere handled; which made me the more willing to set about it, that I might in part both satisfy the desire I have to do all the honour and service I am able to our blessed Lord and Master Christ Jesus, and the delight I take in explaining his holy Scriptures. Of which to be ignorant is to be ignorant of Christ himself, as St. Hierome's words are in the beginning of his first Book of Commentaries upon Isaiah[h].

I do not expect indeed, nor is it possible, that you should have your minds always possessed with such thoughts, and that your hearts should perpetually burst out into such passions as I have here expressed: I myself cannot think them over again, nor any like them, whensoever I please. It is enough, good readers, and as much as we can reach, if you be thus affected at certain times, when your spirit is most serious and retired into itself; and if you endeavour to habituate yourselves to such thoughts and desires, that they may be so familiar and natural, as to become easy and delightful when you will most stand in need of them.

More particularly when the days wherein you live are evil, or when you are under any private trouble, or when you would at any time retreat from the world and solace yourself *in angello cum libello*, 'in a nook with a book,' (to speak with Tho. à Kempis[i], who

[g] [The first edition, 12o. Lond. 1673.]

[h] ["Ignoratio Scripturarum ignoratio Christi est,"—Hieron. Præfat. in Isaiam, tom. iv. col. 1.]

[i] [Valerius Andreas in his account of Thomas à Kempis makes mention of this as his favourite maxim, and the motto which he was in the habit of inscribing in his books: "In omnibus requiem quæsivi, sed non inveni, nisi *in angello cum libello*." (Biblioth. Belg. p. 837.) In the life of the Saint by Herbert Rosweyd, appended to the Elzevir edition of the De Imitatione Christi, the latter clause of the device is rendered in its vernacular dress, "nisi in boecken ende boecken; quod postremum," the writer explains, "Teutonicum Latine sonat, *nisi in angellis et libellis*," p. 247.]

thought this the highest pleasure upon earth,) or when the church calls upon you to sequester yourself for devotion; and especially when old age you feel creeping upon you, and you think of drawing yourselves by degrees out of this life: at all such seasons as these (and chiefly when you come near to your journey's end) this prospect cannot but be most pleasant; and such aspirations and sighs after the day of Christ's appearing be the most ravishing music; and to be transported with such ardent longings as are here represented, make afflictions light and easy, solitary retirements exceeding sweet and delightful, old age cheerful, and death itself very comfortable.

But you must not imagine that love can arrive at its highest pitch presently: nor must you be troubled or discouraged because you cannot instantly, or when you would, raise in yourselves such passionate longings after Christ's appearing. Love is a thing that grows, and, as I may say, steals upon us by degrees; and the passion we feel, at certain seasons, disposes us by little and little to be perfectly in love with that good which is set before us. A good so great and so desirable, that we do not follow our best inclinations if we use not our utmost endeavours to be so happy, as to behold that "admirable countenance" (to speak in the language of St. Chrysostom) of our blessed Saviour the King of glory. "For if," saith he[1], "when we read the story of his life, death, and resurrection, we are so inflamed that our hearts burn within us, and we wish we had lived in those days when he was conversant on earth, that we might have heard his voice, and seen his face, and kept his company, and touched him, and ministered unto him: think with yourselves what it will be to see him, not any longer in a mortal body, nor doing human things, but attended with the hosts of angels, when we also ourselves shall be freed from this mortality, and, beholding him, shall enjoy such felicity as exceeds all expression.

"Let us do all we can, I beseech you, that we may not miss of so great a glory. There is nothing too hard for us, if we have a will to it; nothing too burdensome, if our mind be not averse from it. For if we suffer, or endure, we shall also reign with him. And what is it to suffer? If we bear afflictions, if we endure persecutions, if we walk in the narrow way, which to nature indeed is laborious, but to them who choose it, and have a good will to it, is light and easy, by the hope of things to come. *For our light affliction, which is but for a moment, works for us a far more exceeding and eternal weight of glory; whilst we look not at the things which are seen, but at those which are not seen*[2].

[1] Homil. penult. in S. Johan. p. 925. [Hom. lxxxvii. tom. viii. pp. 522, 3.]
[2] [2 Cor. iv. 17, 18.]

"Let us lift up our eyes then from these things here, and direct them towards heaven; let us imagine always these unseen joys, and look upon them: for if we be conversant with these things, we shall neither be enticed with the sweet things of this world, nor sink under the load of those that are grievous to be borne. But we shall laugh these, and all such like, to scorn; and never suffer any thing either to depress us or to puff us up; provided we still stretch forth that desire, and look towards that love. What did I say, that we shall not feel the evil things of this world to be grievous to us? More than that, we shall scarce mind them, or think that we see them. For such is the nature of love, that it makes us imagine we see even those who are absent from us (but much desired by us) every day with us. Μεγάλη γὰρ τῆς ἀγάπης τύραννις, 'for great is the sovereign power,' and, as we speak, 'the tyranny of love.' It neglects all things, and ties the soul fast to those it loves. And therefore if we thus love Christ Jesus, all things here will seem but a shadow, but an image, but a dream; and we also shall say, *Who shall separate us from the love of Christ*[k]*?*"

I pray God increase it, and make it abound more and more in all our hearts, that it may draw continually nearer towards its perfection; and make us likewise to abound in all the fruits of the Spirit; which are the highest expressions of our love, and the best preparation for the day of Christ's appearing: for true devotion doth not terminate in the heart; it goes further, and hath its effect in the life and actions; and especially excites us to love or charity towards all mankind, and, above all, to our Christian brethren; as that which bears the greatest resemblance to him whom we love. The commandment which St. Paul charges Timothy to *keep without spot*[l] till our Lord's appearing, was, for the most part, acts of charity, as you will find briefly touched in this book. And therefore these we should labour to enliven by our devotion; which is then truly great when it makes us so; and raises our spirits above all anger and peevishness, covetousness, and eager desire of wealth, envy, and vain ambition, evil surmises and jealousies, fretfulness, and impatience, with all those other mean qualities, which are the enemies of Christian charity.

Some readers, perhaps, may think that I strain devotion here unto too great an height; and may be apt, at the entrance, to lay this book aside, because they imagine I have expressed that passion of love, which we should endeavour after towards Christ's appearing, beyond the truth; but I must intreat them to do me the right and

[k] [Rom. viii. 35.] [l] [1 Tim. vi. 14.]

themselves the kindness to read on; and they will find, in conclusion, the whole description of it made good by the plain words of the holy Scriptures.

In the study of which, if we did all conscientiously employ ourselves, it is to be hoped God would still preserve to us that inestimable treasure: which contains such admirable *φάρμακα τῆς ψυχῆς*, (as the forenamed father speaks,) 'medicines of the soul;' both to cure our diseases, and to comfort and restore our tired or languishing spirits. For they are that *living water* our Lord speaks of, which whosoever drinks, hath in himself a *well* or fountain of comfort and perpetual refreshment, *springing up into everlasting life*[m].

[m] [John iv. 14.]

THE

GLORIOUS EPIPHANY,

WITH

THE DEVOUT CHRISTIAN'S LOVE TO IT.

CHAP. I.

Containing an introduction to the ensuing discourse.

WHEN we observe how the desire of life is so deeply fixed in all mankind, both in old and young, in kings and beggars, in wise men and fools, that (as Lactantius well noteth [a]) they will endure any miseries to preserve and prolong it; we are led thereby to this consideration, that the highest and most perfect good to which the soul of man aspires, is a life without end, and without those laborious toils and troubles which attend us here in this present world. We are naturally formed to wish that we may be so happy; and find no thought so sad and dismal as this, of being quite extinct, and never enjoying any more pleasure after we are laid in our graves.

Upon which account it must be acknowledged that we are infinitely indebted to the grace of God, who hath made that so sure which is so desirable; and that our blessed Saviour justly challenges our most ardent love and cheerful obedience, whose religion is nothing else but an *acknowledgment of the truth, which is after godliness, in hope of eternal life* [b]. They are the words of St. Paul, which import that the gospel is a doctrine which teaches us to be pious, and promises to reward our piety with an happy immortality. This is the glorious hope of Christians: whose Master, Christ Jesus, (*who is our hope* [c],) hath *brought life and immortality to light;* and made that which was but obscurely delivered in times past, as clear and bright as the sun at noon day.

There are so many *witnesses* of this, that their testimonies

[a] L. iii. Instit. c. 12. [tom. i. p. 217.] [b] Tit. i. 2. [c] 1 Tim. i. 1.

have filled a large volume. The FATHER, the WORD, the HOLY GHOST, have all declared that *we have eternal life, and this life is in our Saviour, the Son of God.* So say the WATER also, the BLOOD and the SPIRIT: they all consent in this truth, that *Jesus is alive from the dead, and lives for evermore; and because he lives, we shall live also.*

Which welcome news filled the hearts of all those who believed it with excessive joy, even when they *were in heaviness through manifold temptations*[d]. And why it should not have the same effect on us, there is no other reason can be given, but because we do not believe as they did. For they of whom St. Peter speaks had never seen our Lord when he was on earth, no more than we; nor had they any such sight of him as St. Stephen and St. Paul had, after he went to heaven; and yet believing, they *rejoiced with joy unspeakable and full of glory.*

All our business therefore is, to settle this belief steadfastly in our minds: which will have the greater power upon our hearts, when we consider the abundant grace of our Lord Jesus Christ towards us, and how excellent the hope is which he hath given us. For he hath not only assured us that he hath all power in heaven and in earth; and that he will bestow the inestimable gift of immortality upon us; but that he himself will once more come from heaven to crown us with it. *We know* (as I have shown in two former treatises) *that the Son of God is come, and hath given us an understanding to know him that is true: and this is the true God and eternal life,* which he hath revealed to us. But besides this *first coming* to teach us the will of God, to die for our sins, and to open to us the kingdom of heaven, after he had shown us the way to it; he hath bid us believe there is a *second:* when he will come to judge us by those laws which he hath left his church, and to put the observers of them into the possession of that heavenly kingdom which he hath promised.

And there are none of the *witnesses* who testify that he is the king of glory, but assure us of this also, that he will appear in that glory to take us up unto himself. More especially the Holy Ghost, who (as Epiphanius admirably speaks[e]) is "the

[d] 1 Pet. i. 6, 8. [e] Μόνος ὁδηγὸς ἀληθείας, *νόμων ἐξηγητὴς ἁγίων*, &c. Hæres. lxxiv. n. 10. [tom. i. p. 898 D.]

only guide of truth, the expounder of holy laws, the inspirer of the spiritual (or Christian) law, the leader of the prophets, the teacher of the apostles, the luminary of the evangelical doctrines." He made his apostles and evangelists clearly understand this to be our Saviour's meaning, and authorized them to proclaim this comfortable news to all believers. Insomuch that St. Paul triumphs in this, when he was ready to be offered for the service of Christ, and the time of his departure was at hand, that there was *laid up for him a crown of righteousness, which the Lord* (saith he), *the righteous Judge, shall give me at that day: and not to me only, but unto all them also that love his appearing*[t].

In the last part of which words there seems to me to be contained so much of the Christian hope, that they deserve to be explained with the same care and labour that I have bestowed upon the RECORD which the *Father*, the *Son*, the *Holy Ghost*, and all the other *witnesses* have left us, to testify that Jesus is the Son of God, and that in him we have eternal life. For as it transports all true believers with joy to read of a *crown of life*, a *crown of glory*, a *crown of righteousness*, which is laid up safe with our Lord in his heavenly sanctuary, as he himself and his apostles in this and other places confidently assure us; so it very much raises and increases that joyful hope, to know from their own mouths, that he who hath received and keeps it safely will condescend so much as to appear again one day, to confer the very same felicity upon us which he hath obtained himself, *who is crowned with glory and honour*.

Next to the belief of the truth of this report, there is nothing we are so much concerned to know, as who the persons are that shall wear this crown, and have their heads eternally honoured with it. Piety itself, indeed, is very apt to persuade those in whom it lives, that the unfeigned practice of it shall meet at last with some considerable recompense: but that it shall receive such a royal, such a magnificent reward, as deserves the name of a crown of eternal glory, is a thing which that great modesty and humility which is essential to true piety, and its highest ornament and crown, forbids us to be too forward to conclude. A person perhaps of such eminence and lustre as St. Paul (one of the stars of the first magnitude in our Saviour's

[t] 2 Tim. iv. 6, 7, 8.

right hand) may be advanced hereafter to shine in such majesty: but that we dull heavy souls should be thought worthy of the like favour, none but a man so divinely illuminated as he was by the power of the Holy Ghost, is sufficient to secure us.

And, blessed be God, we do not want such a divine testimony. For after this great apostle had related what a course he had run, what agonies he had sustained, with what difficulties he had wrestled in the service of his blessed Master Jesus; and that he nothing doubted but he would remember him at his coming again, and confer the honour on him which was laid up in heaven for such victorious souls: he encourages all other Christians to comfort themselves with the same expectations, and not imagine they should lose the crown (though they came far behind him in the holy race) if they did but *love the appearing*[g] of Christ Jesus.

That is the particular mark and character which he gives of the persons to whom this honour shall be done. For the understanding of which, and that we may the better comprehend both the happiness itself, and that pious affection we ought to have for it (which is the principal drift of this discourse), we are to make an inquiry into these three things:

First, What may be conceived to be the meaning of this *appearing* of our Lord.

Secondly, What certainty there is of it. And,

Thirdly, What the *love* is which they should bear to it who hope to enjoy the blessings of it.

CHAP. II.

Showing what is meant by the appearing of our Lord Jesus Christ.

It is not hard to give an account of the first of these, if we carefully observe and examine the words whereby the holy

[g] Ἀεὶ γὰρ ὁ λόγος ζῶν ὑπάρχων, καὶ τὸ ζῆν ἐφ' ἑαυτοῦ ἔχων, καὶ ζωὴν τοῖς αὐτὸν ἀγαπῶσι διδούς·—Epiph. Hæres. liv. n. 5. [tom. i. p. 466 D.]

books express it. And there are three of them; every one of which signifies, that our blessed Lord (who now reigns in unseen glory) will once more appear visibly to all mankind.

1. The first is *παρουσία*, which we render only his *coming;* but it is a different word from that in our Creed, and in its proper signification denotes his *presenting himself* to us, after he hath been thus long absent from us. In the Creed we profess to believe that he is ascended into heaven, *ὅθεν μέλλει ἔρχεσθαι*, 'from whence he shall come,' &c. But that we may know what kind of *coming* we are to expect (and not imagine it is merely by an invisible power, as he came to destroy Jerusalem), we are to mind how the apostles speak of it as a *παρουσία*; and teach us to understand that word in the strictest sense, concerning his personal appearance to us. Thus St. Paul discourses to the Corinthians, (where we first meet with this word in the apostolical writings,) that every man shall arise from the dead, but in due order; *Christ the first-fruits; and then they that are Christ's, at his coming* [h]: in person, that is, as the King and the Judge of the world. For so he presently after directs us to expound the word [i], when he declares the joy he had by the *παρουσία*, *coming* of Stephanus, Fortunatus and Achaicus, who (as Theodoret there notes [k]) were the persons that brought the letter to him from the church of Corinth. In such a manner he believed Christ would come; and that he and those Christians he had converted appearing *before him*, it would prove the greatest joy and honour to him, to be able to present to that great King such a number of persons who had been persuaded by his ministry to become his subjects [l]. In short, this is the word that is used in most other places, where we read of the *coming* of Christ. And presently after that last-named, he tells us, he will come *attended with all his saints* [m]; and therefore will personally appear, and show himself in that royal majesty wherein he now reigns.

2. Thus the second word still more fully informs us, which is *ἀποκάλυψις*, the *revelation of Jesus Christ*, or his discovering himself again to the world, by coming out of that high and holy place where he now lives, but is not seen. So Theophylact [n] expounds the word both upon 1 Cor. i. 7. and 2 Thess.

[h] 1 Cor. xv. 23. [i] xvi. 17. [k] [tom. iii. p. 284.] [l] 1 Thess. ii. 19. [m] iii. 13. [n] [tom. ii. pp. 123 B, 533 C.]

i. 7, where he says, "The apostle calls the coming of Christ by the name of his *revelation*, to denote that though he be now with us, yet he is hid, and then shall be openly discovered." Which he borrows from St. Chrysostom[o], whose words are these; "The apostle indicates, that though he be not seen, yet he is, and is present even now, and then will appear," or show himself visibly to the world. Œcumenius also writes to the same effect; and we may still further establish this truth, by considering another word of the same import with this (and therefore I shall not mention it distinctly by itself) very much used by St. John, who exhorts his disciples to abide in Christ, that when *φανερωθῇ*, *he shall be made manifest* (or be shown to the world) we may not be ashamed *before him at his coming*[p]. So we translate the word in other places (though here it be rendered only *appear*[q]); especially in that remarkable place, John xxi. 1, where we read how he *showed himself to them* at the sea of Tiberias, and that this was the third time that he *showed* or *made himself manifest*[r] to them after that he was risen from the dead. In the very same visible manner will he once more appear, and be as really manifested to raise us from the dead, and to give us life, as he was *manifested in the flesh*[s] at first, and again *showed himself* after his crucifixion to be alive from the dead. For though our life be now *hid with Christ in God*, yet *when Christ, who is our life, shall appear*, or be manifested, *then shall we also appear with him in glory*[t]. Upon which words Theophylact[u] hath this pertinent gloss: "At his second coming Christ shall be openly manifested, and showed to all as God; though now he be so hid, that it is the thing which is objected against him, and a pretence for men's unbelief." And to the same purpose Theodoret bids us note how exceeding appositely[x] the apostle speaks, when he saith, "Christ will then be manifested, who now is not seen by Christians, nor so much as known by infidels;" but then will let no man remain ignorant of him, because *every eye shall see him*, and all men be forced to confess that he is the Lord of all.

3. For, lastly, to make this still more evident, it is called

[o] In 1 Cor. i. 7. [tom. x. p. 10 C.] [p] 1 John ii. 28. [q] i. 31; iii. 21. [r] Ver. 14. [s] 1 Tim. iii. 16. [t] Col. iii. 4. [u] [tom. ii. p. 487 D.] [x] Ἄγαν ἁρμαδίως εἴρηκε, &c. [in loc. tom. iii. p. 492.]

here (in the words I have undertaken to explain), and in many other places, his ἐπιφάνεια, *appearing*, in so clear and illustrious a manner, that St. Paul bids us look for it as *that blessed hope* of Christian people, far more splendid than any thing that hath yet been manifested; for it is *the glorious appearing*, or the appearing of the glory, *of the great God and our Saviour*[y].

Which epithet is to be carefully observed, because it distinguishes this appearing from a former, and teaches us how we are to conceive of it: for every body knows (who hath any skill in these things) that there is at least a double *appearing* of Christ spoken of in the holy writings. One past, when he came and sensibly appeared, and was manifested in mortal flesh, for these two ends, to preach the gospel, and to die for our sins. Let the reader consult 1 Tim. i. 10. and Hebr. ix. 26. This is called the *appearing of God's grace* (Tit. ii. 11), which was so manifested at this time that it eclipsed all former discoveries that had been made of it.

The other is yet to come; when the same Lord will as sensibly appear to reward men according to the entertainment they have given his gospel, and show himself as a royal Priest, who hath so perfectly expiated our sins and conquered all our enemies, that he hath nothing then to do but to give complete salvation to his servants. So you read Hebr. ix. 28, that, to them who expect him, *he will appear the second time* (ὀφθήσεται, 'make himself be seen, appear visibly') *without sin unto salvation*. As in the former coming he was seen in our flesh, but appeared like a mean person, in the form of a servant; so in this he will personally appear in our nature, but in greater splendour, in the form of a prince, even as the Lord of all the world. And therefore, in the first verse of this chapter[z], his *kingdom* and his *appearing* are both put together, as things contemporary; and as before there was an appearance of his grace, so hereafter he is said to *appear in his glory*[a].

To these two appearings some add a third, in the middle between them; and that was his appearing to destroy Jerusalem, and therewith the persecutors of his disciples; to whom, at that time, it must be acknowledged, he gave a mighty *sal-*

[y] Tit. ii. 13. [z] 2 Tim. iv. 1. [a] Col. iii. 4.

vation or deliverance. And the very truth is, then he is said in the gospel to *come. What if I will that he tarry* ἕως ἔρχομαι, *till I come*[b]*?* and, Ἰδοὺ ἔρχεται, *Behold, he cometh*[c]. Nay, in a looser sense of the word, that time is called by St. Matthew his παρουσία[d]; and by St. Luke the *kingdom of God*[e], (because then he did exercise one part of his royal power in punishing offenders.) But I do not find that in any place it is called the *revelation* or the *appearing* of the Lord Jesus: for he did not appear in person when he came to destroy Jerusalem, as he did at his first coming, and will at his next; but only virtually, in such a desolation as made it apparent that his mighty power was the author of it.

There are two places, I know, alleged by a great man, which he thinks sound this way, 1 Pet. i. 7. and 1 Tim. vi. 14. But it is far more agreeable to the coherence of those places to expound them of the *appearing* we still expect: of which we may look upon his coming to destroy his crucifiers, and save his servants, as an emblem and as a pledge; for it demonstrated both the power of our Lord Jesus, and his faithfulness to his word; assuring us that he will one day crown the patience and constancy of all his friends with eternal life, and punish the insolence of his enemies with everlasting fire.

However, it is past all doubt that in this place I am treating of the apostle speaks of the last and greatest appearing of our Saviour, to finish the work of our redemption, and bestow the crown of righteousness, which is laid up in heaven for all that love him. Which part of our Christian faith, I have shown, is to be understood in this manner: that our Lord will in person present himself once more to the world, and be seen at the last day to be what he is, the king of angels and men, and all creatures. For as at his first coming into the world he *appeared* in our likeness (which the ancients called his *Epiphany*, a name that still sticks to the last day of the feast of his Nativity), and as he appeared in the same likeness when he rose from the dead, and in that form and nature of a man went up into heaven, and still keeps it there, as several have seen since his ascension; so he will in like manner appear in

[b] John xxi. 22. [c] Rev. i. 7. [d] Matt. xxiv. 27, 37, 39. [e] Luke xxi. 31.

the end of the world, only in greater majesty and glory, as becomes him *who is over all, God blessed for ever. Amen*[f].

CHAP. III.

A further illustration of the appearing of our Lord Jesus Christ.

THERE is nothing to be added to what hath been said but only this; that the word *Epiphany* or *appearing* denotes not merely the presenting of himself in person to the view of all the world, but the whole *show* (as we call it) that will accompany his coming from heaven, and all the things that shall be done by him as the Lord and Judge of the world. He sits now on the throne of his glory, and there shines in the splendour of the Divine Majesty, and in that majesty will one day descend from thence into this air; which the King of heaven will never suffer his Son to do without a most royal and glorious attendance, suitable to the quality of his person and to the dignity of his office, which is to judge the quick and the dead.

This illustrious *show* is described by our apostle, in 1 Thess. iv. 16, where he tells us that first of all *he shall descend from heaven* ἐν κελεύσματι, *with a shout;* that is, with great acclamations, such as use to be made when a mighty conqueror appears and rides in triumph. Thus we learn to understand it from Psalm xlvii. 5, where *God* is said to be *gone up with a shout, the Lord with the sound of a trumpet:* that is, the ark (which was the token of God's presence among them) returned to mount Sion with great and joyful ovations of all the people, after the conquest they got by the divine aid over their powerful enemies. In such a manner will our Saviour descend, as being about to complete his victories by conquering death itself, *the last enemy that shall be destroyed.* For all the heavenly hosts, we may well conceive, will be wonderfully pleased to see him go forth upon this design, and, calling upon each other to perform to him the most cheerful service upon that great day, will rejoice to wait upon him in that most glorious

[f] Rom. ix. 5.

action, and triumph beforehand in the assured victory which he will get over hell and the grave.

2. For then, saith the apostle, will be *heard the voice of the archangel;* that is, one of the chief leaders and commanders of the celestial hosts (Michael, I suppose, the protector of the Christian church) shall march before his Majesty, calling aloud to all the rest of that heavenly company to follow after in their order.

3. And then will *the trump of God* sound; which the apostle adds to signify, after the manner of men, the powerful summons which will be issued forth to alarm all the world to attend at this great solemnity. For the gathering of the congregation of Israel together was by the sound of a trumpet, as we find, among other places, in Jer. iv. 5: *Blow ye the trumpet in the land; cry, gather together, and say, Assemble yourselves.* To which the apostle seems to allude, and calls it *the trump of God,* to distinguish it from all other, and to express such a mighty and penetrating sound as shall be heard every where; such an one as is fit to precede none but God the Father Almighty himself, or him that holds his place, his only begotten Son, when he comes to judge the world. In short, this seems to be an expression borrowed from the appearance of God at mount Sinai[h]: whither all Israel being to be gathered together, they were summoned thither by thunders and lightnings and a thick cloud, and *the voice of the trumpet exceeding loud*[i], which made all the people tremble. So that the meaning of the apostle is, that our Lord shall come as the great King of the world in a most venerable majesty, which shall make all mankind stand in awe of him, and tremble before him, as the Israelites did at the appearance of the divine majesty on mount Sinai. And a great deal more: for,

4. When he appears, it will be, as I have intimated already, with innumerable glittering troops of angels (all clothed in very bright and shining clouds) as his guard or retinue to attend upon him. So we are informed in several other places: *For the Son of man* (saith our Lord himself[k]) *shall come in the glory of his Father, with his angels, and then he shall*

[h] So Theophylact [in loc. tom. ii. p. 521 D.] and other Greek interpreters. [S. Chrysost. in loc. tom. xi. p. 478 B; Theodoret in loc. tom. iii. p. 519.]

[i] Exod. xix. 16.

[k] Matt. xvi. 27.

reward every man according to his works. Which St. Luke expresses thus more fully[l]: *Whosoever shall be ashamed of me and of my words, of him shall the Son of man be ashamed, when he shall come in his own glory, and in his Father's, and of the holy angels.* Some of which glorious creatures appeared to the apostles, and told them as much, when they stood gazing after our Saviour as he ascended up into heaven. *This same Jesus,* say they, *which is taken up from you into heaven, shall so come in like manner as ye have seen him go into heaven*[m]. Now he went thither in a most illustrious manner, in the bright clouds of heaven, attended by the celestial ministers; who came to conduct him into his glory. For that is the meaning (it were easy to show if this place were proper for it) of those words a little before[n]: *He was taken* (or lifted) *up, and a cloud received him out of their sight.*

In brief, he will appear as the *Lord of hosts,* i. e. of all the armies of heaven. whether archangels or angels, thrones or dominions, or powers, or whatsoever other name there is whereby they are called.

5. And then making the air his camp, where he will pitch his royal pavilion, a *great white* (i. e. most royal and shining) *throne* will be set for him[o], and lesser seats, it is likely, for all those whom he intends to honour at that great day[p].

6. After which he will send forth his voice, his mighty voice, or most powerful and irresistible word of command; the efficacy of which will be such that it will raise the dead out of their graves, and bring them before his throne or judgment-seat. So he himself tells us in John v. 28, 29: *The hour is coming in which all that are in the graves shall hear his voice, and shall come forth; they that have done good unto the resurrection of life, and they that have done evil unto the resurrection of damnation.* Of which authority and power of his, he tells them[q] they should shortly have a proof: which was at the resurrection of Lazarus, when he did but say with a loud voice, *Lazarus, come forth*[r]; and immediately he that was dead (as it there follows[s]) came forth, though bound hand and foot with grave-clothes.

[l] Luke ix. 26. [m] Acts i. 11. [n] Ver. 9. [o] Rev. xx. 11.
[p] 1 Cor. vi. 2, 3. [q] John v. 25. [r] xi. 43. [s] Ver. 44.

In as easy a manner will he at the last day raise up all mankind; who, being then gathered before him, and standing at his tribunal, shall be judged and sentenced by him to receive every one according as their works have been[t].

Some indeed shall rise before others, (as St. Paul informs us in that 1 Thess. iv. 16,) but such shall be the conclusion of this glorious appearance; which, as far as the holy Scriptures (our only guide in those matters) would direct me, I have briefly explained. For after he hath taken an exact survey of men's actions, and made a just distinction of their persons, in such sort as he himself hath told us[u], (where all belonging to this judgment is summed up,) he will crown the fidelity of his obedient disciples; and, returning back from the air, (whither they will be caught up in glorious clouds to meet him,) he will carry them along with him to his heavenly palace; *and so,* saith the apostle, *shall we be ever with the Lord*[x].

And who is there now that would not wish to behold him come in this royal majesty, and put such an happy end to all our labours and troubles here? What soul is there that can forbear to love and earnestly desire this glorious sight, if it hope to reap advantage by it? This is that on which all good Christians should set their hearts. This they should wait and long for, as the most lovely spectacle that can bless their eyes, whensoever it shall please God to let it appear. They may be tempted rather to be impatient, because it is so long deferred, than to be cold in their affection towards it, or indifferent whether it come or no. Nothing can hinder it from raising the most ardent desires to enjoy it, unless any doubt creep into our hearts, whether there will be such a time as I have described. That distrust indeed, if we have any, must first be removed. We ought to look after a good assurance of the certainty of that which we make the object of our love and most passionate expectations.

For if we expect a show, that is only painted in our own fancies in curious colours, but hath no real existence any where else, what an amazing disappointment will it be to find we have set our hearts on that which is not, and have embraced a

[t] Rev. xx. 12, 13. 2 Cor. v. 10. [u] Matt. xxv. 31–33, &c.
[x] 1 Thess. iv. 17.

cloud instead of God! How miserable should we feel ourselves if at last we perceived that we had pressed a dream, and with long out-stretched arms (as I may speak) most ardently clasped about a shadow! Into what a gulf of shame should we tumble if we saw in the conclusion and issue of things the whole weight of our souls and most hearty affections fall upon the thin air and have nothing to support them! Nothing can express the confusion it would throw us into, to find that we had courted, so many years or ages perhaps, a mere vision of our own hearts, and let our affection loose to wander in the paradise of fools.

That we may be out of fear therefore of any such disappointment, and have our affections powerfully excited towards so great a good, and be engaged most earnestly to pursue it, I shall proceed to the second part of this discourse, which is to show the grounds we have to expect the *appearing* of the Lord Jesus the second time unto our eternal salvation.

CHAP. IV.

The certainty of this appearing of our Lord Jesus Christ.

To prove that there will certainly be such an *appearing* of our Lord as will surpass even the glory wherein the apostles saw him on the holy mount, (which St. Luke plainly shows was a figure of it[y],) I might allege all those arguments which assure us there will be a day wherein God will judge the world in righteousness; and that the Lord Jesus is ordained to be the Person by whom he will judge it. Which is as much as to say, that all those arguments which prove him to be *the Son of God* might be employed to this purpose; for in that name is included (as I have shown in former treatises) his power and authority to be the Judge of the world. This the *Father*, the *Word*, the *Holy Ghost*, and the other *witnesses* on earth, as well as those in heaven, testify to be an undoubted truth; and therefore I might from every one of their mouths demonstrate, that he shall appear again in such a manner as I

[y] Luke ix. 26–28.

have described. For all judges, much more the supreme Judge of all, ever ascend their tribunals in robes of state, and royally attended, as those that represent the majesty for whom they judge.

But it would be too tedious to follow that method, and it is not needful I should lead you so far about to bring you and this truth together. There is one place in the writings of the apostle St. Paul, which, if well expounded and understood, will be sufficient to persuade us we do not abuse ourselves with vain expectations of this *appearing*. And therefore with the explication of that (which contains divers arguments to establish us in this belief) I shall content myself, without having recourse to every one of those *witnesses*. And I shall the rather confine myself to it, because I shall illustrate a very considerable portion of God's holy book, (which upon all occasions we ought to design to make perspicuous,) while I endeavour to give satisfactory reasons that our Lord Jesus will appear again, and in so glorious a manner as hath been related.

It is in his former Epistle to this very person, his beloved son Timothy[z], where he charges him to keep the commandment he had given him, without the least violation of it, *until the appearing of our Lord Jesus Christ;* that is, till his coming from heaven, with all the glorious train of angels, to recompense men according to their works. Now that Timothy might be fully persuaded there would be such a blessed time, and to be more ready and cheerful in his obedience to this exhortation, the apostle assures him that this is no such spectacle as is formed merely in the imagination; but which God the possessor of heaven and earth will really exhibit in his time. So the words are, *Which* (appearing) *in his times he shall show, who is the blessed and only Potentate, the King of kings, and Lord of lords: who only hath immortality, dwelling in the light which no man can approach unto, whom no man hath seen nor can see*[a].

Where we are first to observe well those words which begin this description of him who will show our Lord Christ in such excellent glory, ἰδίοις καιροῖς, *in his times*, (we render it,) or rather 'in the proper seasons' for it; that is, in the time or

[z] 1 Tim. vi. 13, 14. [a] Ver. 15, 16.

season which God in his unsearchable wisdom hath appointed. From which phrase three things offer themselves to our consideration.

First, that the time, indeed, of this *appearing* is not revealed and made known to us. We must be content to be ignorant of it, for it is kept as a secret in his own breast, and it becomes not us to determine the season which he hath reserved to himself. Some great men, it is true, have adventured upon it; and Saint Hilary[b], for instance, hath delivered his opinion, that the transfiguration of our Lord, *six days* after he had spoken of his *coming in his kingdom*[c], prefigured the "honour of the celestial kingdom," (as his words are,) after the world had continued six thousand years. But this and the current fancy among many in ancient times, that because the world was six days in making it should last just six thousand years, had no better foundation than those misapplied words of St. Peter[d], *that one day with the Lord is as a thousand years.* And therefore it is deservedly censured by St. Augustine (upon Ps. xc. 4[e]) as a presumption reprehended by our Lord himself, when he told his apostles, *It is not for you to know the times or the seasons, which the Father hath put in his own power*[f]. And yet there have been those who would needs be meddling, and conclude this from no better reason than the translation of Enoch, who was the seventh from Adam. And there is one of great note in these later times, (to name no more,) who hath been so bold as from a slighter ground to conjecture the time of the coming of our Lord. Who having said in Luke iv. 19, that, according to Isaiah's prophecy, he was come *to preach the acceptable year of the Lord,* or to proclaim a jubilee to the world, Cusanus[g] thence concluded that for every year of our Saviour's life, the church should continue a jubilee, that is, fifty years. And therefore he rising again in the 34th year of his age, the church should have its blessed resurrection when the 34th jubilee was past; that is, after the year 1700, before the year 1734, which he

[b] Canon xvii. in Matth. [col. 752 C.]
[c] Matt. xvii. 1.
[d] 2 Pet. iii. 8.
[e] [Al. Psalm lxxxix. 4. tom. iv. col. 956 C.]
[f] Acts i. 7.
[g] [In conjectura de novissimis diebus, Opp. p. 933.]

endeavours to make more probable from the similitude of the flood, which our Saviour, he observes, uses when he speaks of his coming: fancying that, as from the first Adam to the destruction of the world by water there passed, according to Philo, just thirty-four jubilees; so there shall be the like number of years from the second Adam to the consumption of it by fire. There are several other little fancies whereby he studies to strengthen this conceit; but I shall not mention them, because, as St. Austin hath rightly pronounced again in another place[h], from that saying of our Saviour beforementioned, it is better to confess our ignorance than to profess a false knowledge. And this, we have reason to think, is no better, because such supputations of the times, as he speaks, that we may know when will be the end of the world, and the coming of the Lord, seem to be nothing else but a desire to know that which he himself hath said, the Father hath reserved only to himself. Which words our Saviour did not speak because he was ignorant of the time about which the apostles inquired, but (as Œcumenius[i] well notes) because it would contribute nothing to their salvation to be acquainted with it. And it is the office of an excellent Master to teach, *μὴ ἃ βούλονται οἱ μαθηταὶ*[j], &c., 'not what the scholars desire, but what it is profitable for them to learn.' This was the only reason he denied to satisfy them; for he himself knew very well the times and seasons, as the same writer adds, because, *all that the Father hath is the Son's also.* Now,

We are to consider (in the second place) that God the Father hath determined and set down a time for this appearing of his Son Jesus, though he hath not thought fit to have us acquainted with it. It is not the less certain because he hath not revealed when it will be; since he hath fore-appointed in his own secret counsel a season proper for this business. This ought to give no small strength to our faith and hope; for we are wont always to make the surer account of a thing, and look for it the more confidently, when we know there is a time limited and prefixed for its performance.

The apostle indeed supposes (which is the third thing) that many ages might pass before this appointed time arrived; but

[h] Epist. lxxviii. [al. cxcvii. tom. ii. col. 739 A.]
[i] [In Act. i. 7. tom. i. p. 6 B.] [j] [Id. ibid.

yet it will not fail to come at last. The phrase being in the plural number[k], seems naturally to denote a long time hence. And if we observe the use of the very same phrase in another place of this Epistle[l], (where he saith our Saviour *gave himself a ransom for all, a testimony* καιροῖς ἰδίοις, '*in due season*,' as we there translate it,) we cannot well allow it any other meaning in this. For there it signifies that our Lord at last did give a most memorable testimony of the exceeding great grace of God, though several ages were passed by (since the first promise made of his coming) before he appeared in flesh to die for us: and therefore here in all reason it must be conceived to denote the revolution of several ages more, from that first coming of his till the second appearing in astonishing glory, as Œcumenius justly calls it[m].

How many ages we cannot tell; and some of those who thought heretofore they could tell, committed so gross an error in their account, that it hath taught posterity to be more cautious in determining any thing about it. They, I mean, who fancied the world should continue just six thousand years, following the computation of the Greek translators of the Bible, brought this period to an end many ages ago. Lactantius, for instance, tells us (and it is above thirteen hundred years since he died) that *post breve tempus*[n], 'after a short time,' they expected the conclusion of all things. And although they varied in their account, and could not agree in the exact sum of the years that were still to come, yet *Omnis expectatio non amplius quam ducentorum videtur annorum*[o], 'in this they seemed all to consent, that they would not exceed two hundred years.' But St. Ambrose lived to confute these conjectures; and saith that according to his reckoning this period of six thousand years was out in his days. And should we follow the computation of the Hebrews, perhaps we should not come nearer to the mark if we still depended on such expectations: but after these six thousand years are indeed expired, there may be a great number, for any thing we know, still to come before the end of all things. Which notwithstanding

[k] καιροῖς, 'times.'

[l] Chap. ii. 6.

[m] [In 1 Tim. vi. 15. tom. ii. p. 248 D.]

[n] Lib. vii. Divin. Instit. c. 14. [tom. i. p. 558.]

[o] Ib. cap. 25. [p. 583.]

should be no discouragement to us, as long as it is sure and certain he will come: the time being set, and he who hath prefixed it being so qualified, that no doubt he will show our Saviour in all his glory, *ἐν τοῖς προσήκουσι, τοῖς ἀφωρισμένοις καιροῖς*[p], 'in the most convenient and peculiar season, which is set apart and destined for it.' For as there was a *fulness of time*[q] when it was resolved our Saviour should first appear, after they had waited many ages for him, so there is no doubt the like time set for his last appearing, and the consummation of all things, though it may be long before it be fulfilled. He who so faithfully performed his promise of the one will never fail us in the other; because he remains the same almighty and unchangeable Lord and governor of all things; whose will none can resist, and whose purpose none can frustrate or divert, but it shall certainly *ἐν καιροῖς ὀφειλομένοις*, (as St. Chrysostom expounds it[r],) 'in due season,' take effect.

And that is the chief thing I intend here to note; the description of the person who will exhibit and show Christ Jesus again to the world in the most magnificent glory, viz. God the Father Almighty. Six of whose attributes or properties are here mentioned by the apostle to confirm this faith in Timothy, and to work it in us: that he will not fail in his times to bring our Saviour again out of his holy place, and make him appear in such a manner as they preached.

The grounds of their preaching it was, that (first of all) our Saviour had made them a solemn promise before he left them, that he would return and take them up to the same place whither he was going, *I go to prepare a place for you. And if I go to prepare a place for you, I will come again, and receive you unto myself; that where I am, there you may be also*[s]. And (2) the holy angels likewise had added their testimony since he went up to heaven to the truth of this promise. For as they were looking after him when they saw him ascend, two of them stood by them and said, *This same Jesus which you saw taken up into heaven shall so come in like manner as ye have seen him going into heaven*[t]. And

[p] Theophylact. [in 1 Tim. vi. 15. tom. ii. p. 587 C.] and Œcumenius. [ibid. p. 249 A.]

[q] Gal. iv. 4.

[r] [In loc. tom. xi. p. 654 B.]

[s] John xiv. 2, 3.

[t] Acts i. 11.

(3) after this the Holy Ghost came, which was the fulfilling of a promise something like to this; *A little while, and ye shall not see me: and again, a little while, and ye shall see me, because I go to the Father*[u]. This was the deputy of our Saviour, (as Tertullian speaks,) and the testimony of his presence; by whom he visited them, and came again to see them according to his word[x]: and the other promises they concluded would be as certainly made good as this was. But (lastly) St. Paul had a greater reason still to preach this, because he had received an express warrant and command from our Lord Christ himself, since he went to the throne of his glory to declare that he would come again in all that pomp and royal majesty which the apostle describes in 1 Thess. iv. 16, 17. For what he there delivers about this matter he assures the Thessalonians was ἐν λόγῳ Κυρίου, *by the word of the Lord*. Other things (as Theophylact notes[y]) he spake by the Holy Ghost, but this he learnt from Christ himself, and heard from his own mouth: either when our Lord first appeared to him and gave him a commission to preach what he had seen, or at some other time, when he further *appeared unto him*[z]; or else, as Œcumenius[a] conjectures, when he was caught up into the third heaven, and into Paradise; where he heard many things which he was not permitted, or could not utter; though thus far he was able to inform us, that the glory wherein our Lord reigned would one day be visibly revealed.

Now see upon what solid reasons and sure foundations the apostle persuades Timothy to believe that God the Father will perform this promise of our Lord and Saviour; whom it is apparent he sent, and hath therefore highly exalted, because he never said nor did any thing but what he commanded him.

I. First, he tells him that there will no doubt be such a glorious appearing of our Lord Jesus Christ, because he who will show him in his splendour is ὁ Μακάριος, 'the Blessed One.' As much as to say, so full a good, that he wants nothing at all to complete and perfect his happiness; and therefore (1)

[u] John xvi. 16.
[x] Ver. 22.
[y] [In loc. tom. ii. p. 521 A.]
[z] Acts xxvi. 16, 17, &c.
[a] Ἵσως καὶ τοῦτο ἐν ἦν τῶν ἀρρήτων, &c. [in loc. tom. ii. p. 173 C.]

cannot be tempted out of any envy (with which none but penurious beings are capable to be infected) to deny us this exceeding great favour. But rather (2) will be moved by his plenitude and his bountiful nature to communicate it to us, according to our Saviour's promise. Especially (3) since he hath already advanced him to the highest bliss and happiness, and can so easily, without any damage to himself, make all others blessed who are faithful to him. And (4) is unchangeable also (which Theodoret[b] thinks is included in this word) both in his nature and in his purpose, because, being most blessed in himself, he cannot alter for any thing that is better.

They that have but a little may be loath to give; and they who have any defect may be unwilling that any should approach too nigh their greatness: for, wanting something themselves, they may be best pleased when they see that others do so too, and they may find that convenience in breaking, which they could not have done in keeping their word. But he that wants nothing, nor is liable to any diminution of what he hath, (being in full perfect possession of all happiness, pleasure and bliss,) can never be unwilling to impart good things to others, nor desirous they should be less happy than their natures are capable to be; nor tempted to go back with his word, when he hath engaged himself to them good. No, rather quite contrary; he takes a pleasure in filling others out of his exuberant goodness, and cannot be inclined to be more forward to make very gracious promises than he is to make them good to those who patiently expect the performance.

Thus we cannot but believe when we reflect upon his blessedness. Especially when we consider withal that he is *μόνος δυνάστης*, (which is the second thing.)

II. *The only Potentate.* This signifies his absolute power, as the other did his good-will, to make such a public show of Jesus Christ, attended with the pomp of all the heavenly host, to judge the world. Which power of his is denoted by that word *only* to be independent, originally inherent in himself, and not derived from any other: for which cause there can be no defect in it, nor can it ever grow less than it is.

There are several other *potentates*, it is true, both in heaven

[b] Τὸ *ἄτρεπτον ἔδειξεν μακάριον ὀνομάσας*, &c. [in loc. tom. iii. p. 672.]

and in earth; but whatsoever power, might, or authority there is in them, it is derived entirely from him, as the source and fountain of it. They have nothing but what springs out of him, and holds of him; who the apostle therefore pronounces hath the empire or supreme authority over the world *alone* to himself; because whatsoever others have, it is not natural but arbitrary and at pleasure; his essential and of himself. It hath no higher cause, and therefore is inseparable from him; and can never be either wholly destroyed, or in the least impaired and weakened. No, he continues always as he ever was, the *Rock of our strength*, and of our *salvation*, (as the Psalmist speaks [c]), on whom our souls may build a most sure hope; which stands on such a bottom as no power whatsoever can shake. For he being so very great, so absolute a *Potentate*, there wants nothing but his own will to the effecting any thing (even so great a thing as this, *the appearing of Jesus Christ*), and of that we are secured by the foregoing consideration, that he is the *Blessed*.

III. To which the apostle further adds that he is *King of kings, and Lord of lords;* whereby we are to understand the dominion, which by his supreme power and authority he exercises over the whole world, over angels of highest degree, and men of greatest rank, as well as over other inferior creatures. They are all so much below him, and so perfectly subject to his pleasure, that the strongest and most mighty opposers that can be imagined have no power to do any thing to hinder this glorious appearance. A force like that of the Persian, Assyrian, and Egyptian kings, (who were all wont to speak in this lofty style) is not so considerable to him as so many flies would be to them. No, nor if we should suppose a power that could claim a just title to the government of the universe, would it be able to withstand the will of him to whom alone this great name of *King of kings* doth properly appertain. Nay more than this, should all the hosts of heaven combine together in a confederacy to join with all the forces on earth, assembled in one body under their several princes and chieftains, they could not by all their resistance defeat his decree which he hath passed for the coming of our Lord.

And yet we are not to make any such supposal, because they

[c] Psalm lxii. 2, 6, 7.

all obey his commandment, and are obedient to the voice of his word. And as for those creatures (be they never such *principalities and powers in high places*[d]) which will not now obey him, they shall not be able at that time to gainsay his sovereign will; but they shall attend, whether they will or no, upon this royal person, Christ Jesus. The good angels, those celestial *lords,* (whether thrones or dominions, or whatever other name of authority there is above,) and all inferior governors, the gods upon earth, (emperors, kings, princes, and judges of the world,) together with those evil angels who are called *the rulers of the darkness of this world*; they shall all appear either with or before our Saviour; according as the *great King* shall appoint, who hath promised to show him; for he is the supreme Lord and Ruler of them all.

IV. And such a supereminent King (as the apostle goes on) is he who *only hath immortality:* that is, lives for ever to make good what he hath promised, which cannot be said of any but of himself. Earthly kings are as weak and mortal as their subjects: and so all their promises (though they intend never so seriously to perform them, and have power for the present to do it) may fail and come to nought, because they themselves may fail and return unto their dust. And *in that very day,* saith the Psalmist, *their thoughts perish*[e]*;* that is, all their designs, counsels and purposes, with all the promises and great hopes that depend upon them, die together with those that made them. But that great King, the Lord of lords, who hath immortality, and who *only* hath it; that is, of himself, and not from any one's gift and favour (being the Lord, as I said, of angels as well as of our spirits, which οὐκ ἔχουσιν ἀθανασίαν, ἀλλὰ μετέχουσιν αὐτῆς, &c., 'have not immortality, but partake of it' by the grace of him who alone by nature is immortal[f]), he, I say, may be confided in and relied upon; because, he neither wanting power, nor being subject to death or alteration, none of his counsels and purposes can be defeated. No promise of his can fall to the ground in process of time; because he lives then in all succeeding ages, as much as he did at that moment when he passed it.

[d] Ephes. vi. 12. [e] Psalm cxlvi. 4.

[f] Theophylact, [in loc. tom. ii. p. 587 E.] and Œcumenius. [in loc. tom. ii. p. 249 B.]

And besides this, it is very considerable, that having immortality of himself, (which the apostle means, as I noted just now, when he saith he *only* hath it,) he can grant this benefit to us, even to our bodies, as he hath done to the angels, and to our blessed Lord and Saviour. Who saith concerning himself, *I am he that liveth and was dead*, (i. e. am alive from the dead,) *and behold I am alive for evermore, Amen*, (i. e. there is nothing more certain;) *and have the keys of hell and of death*[g]. Power, that is, to open the graves of others, and promote them to immortality with myself.

And there is no reason to fear lest our Saviour should not come and appear to do this; though it may be a great way off, and many centuries of years have passed since he gave us his word for it: because God the Father Almighty, the blessed and only Potentate, who authorized him to make this promise, and hath since that raised him from the dead, is immortal, and hath an indefectible life in himself, of his own nature. His will, as I have said, doth not alter, and his power cannot be impaired, or suffer any decay; and therefore he can and will continue and perpetuate the kingdom he hath given to our blessed Mediator Christ Jesus; and keep him in full power and authority till that great day: and when the fulness of time is come, bring him again upon the stage of the world (if I may so speak,) and show him openly as the great Lord of all; whom he hath honoured already with his own high title of *KING OF KINGS, AND LORD OF LORDS*[h]. All this is as easy for him to do, as it was at first to raise him out of his grave, and then advance him to the throne of his glory; where he now sits at the right hand of the Majesty on high.

And there is the greater reason to believe that he will both perpetuate the kingdom of Christ to the world's end, and conclude it with the glorious exaltation of all his subjects, when he shall appear again; (it being no more difficult than it was to carry him to heaven;) because, as the apostle further notes,

V. *He dwells in light inaccessible;* which no man, that is, can enter into or approach. This signifies the inconceivable brightness of the divine Majesty; both as to his essence which cannot by us be comprehended, and as to the place where he

[g] Rev. i. 18. [h] Rev. xix. 16.

more eminently manifests himself in an amazing splendour. He is the great King who lives above in the highest heavens, as in his palace; where he represents himself in a glory so shining and dazzling (called in Scripture his *majesty*) that it is not for such as we (till there be a marvellous change wrought in us) to come nigh it.

Nor is it so beseeming that he should descend himself from thence in that most glorious *majesty* to judge the world, and to transform all those who shall be accounted worthy to obtain that better world, and *the resurrection from the dead*[1]. And therefore we may be confident our blessed Saviour, who long ago was ordained to be the person, will, according to his word, come as his commissioner to do it in his stead. It is not so agreeable to his state and greatness (if I may so express it) to come himself out of his orb of light to fetch us to his house and dwelling-place: but since he hath appointed a day of recompences, we may be sure he will send his Son in *the glory of the Father*], as he tells us, (that is, in a *majesty* like that I now spake of,) *and in the glory of his holy angels*, (who use to attend him,) to meet us and conduct us safely thither.

Or we may conceive of this expression after this manner: God (the Father, that is, the Son, and the Holy Ghost) is in that high and holy place, the sanctuary above; into which no man hath yet entered, save only the great High Priest of our salvation, the Lord Jesus. And yet God hath made us a promise by him, before he went to heaven, that we also shall live with him, and be there where he is. From whence we may conclude, that this great High Priest will certainly come in his royal majesty, out of that place into which he is gone, *to bless us*, by bringing us to that region of light and glory which he himself only as yet inherits; and which is not any way accessible, but only by his means. In whose power, we may be satisfied, it is to promote us thither, being in such favour with the divine Majesty, and sitting at his right hand: who *inhabits* or possesses this glorious place as his own proper *dwelling*, and therefore can dispose of a mansion in it to whom he pleases.

VI. And indeed the apostle bids us remember, (which is the

[1] [Phil. iii. 11.] [1] Luke ix. 26.

last thing,) that *no man hath seen God, nor can see him;* is capable, that is, to be in his glorious presence. Which signifies partly the same with the former; and also may suggest among other things the faithfulness of him who hath promised to show us this appearing of Christ Jesus; of *God*, that is, the Father Almighty. Who we see here plainly is the person of whom the apostle hath, all this time, been speaking, (as St. Ambrose [k] and St. Chrysostom [l] also, if his gloss be well weighed, understand him,) not of our Saviour: who hath been seen already and shall be seen again at his second appearing. And you know, he hath promised to the *pure in heart* that they *shall see God* [m]. A favour which in this state no man hath enjoyed or can enjoy, as St. Paul here tells us. It is not for such as we to *see God;* and therefore there must be a time, when, according to his faithful promise, Christ Jesus shall appear again; to change us, and put us in such a condition, that he may bring us to that sight of him which no man in this world can have.

Either we must remain for ever without the sight of him: (and then God would not be true, who hath said by his Son that we shall see him;) or we must be carried up from hence unto his heavenly palace; and then our Lord must appear to fit us for it, and make us capable of such a blessedness, and to transport us thither.

For how we should otherways be conveyed to a place so much above us but by the coming of our Lord, to lift us up and promote us to it, we cannot understand; since this is the way that he hath described; and our Lord Jesus is to have the honour of doing all the good to his faithful servants which God in his infinite goodness designs to bestow upon them.

This I take to be intimated in these words, *whom no man hath seen, nor can see,* which declare still more fully than was said before the supereminent excellence and perfection of the divine nature, and the astonishing brightness of his majesty: which, whilst we are here, we cannot reach, or attain any considerable sight of; and therefore Christ Jesus, who hath promised we shall see him, will appear again to fit us for conversation with him.

And indeed, since God hath already fulfilled his promise of

[k] [Pseud-Ambros. in loc. tom. ii. append. col. 304 A.]
[l] [In loc. tom. xi. p. 654 B.] [m] Matt. v. 8.

the first appearance of his Son, and sent him, born of a woman, to bring the glad tidings of salvation to us (by which he did, in one sense, make us *see God*[m], that is, understand his mind, counsels, and will); and since another promise likewise of his coming to destroy his crucifiers (when *every eye,* he saith, *should see him*[n]; that is, his power and glory at God's right hand should be abundantly thereby manifested to the world) is punctually and exactly made good; what reason have we to doubt of the certainty of his other appearing, which is still behind, when we shall behold him personally present with us, to bring us nearer into the very presence of God?

We have the same word passed for it which they had for the other; he hath the same will, the same power, the same empire and sovereign dominion: and therefore why should we not have the same confidence, and expect it with as much and full assurance as holy men in old times waited for the first consolation of Israel, or pious Christians waited for deliverance from their adversaries?

There is so little cause that our faith should think itself less assured than theirs, that we may rather look for this second appearing of our Lord and Saviour with much greater confidence than they could do for the first; because we have the advantage of seeing all those old prophecies which foretold his manifestation in our flesh actually fulfilled; and the Lord hath shown since that *how upright he is,* and that *there is no unrighteousness in him*[o]. We may depend not only (as the apostle hath here told us) upon his goodness and perfect happiness, upon his power, upon his absolute dominion over all creatures whatsoever, upon his immortality, upon his transcendent glory and majesty, and upon his faithfulness and truth; but, I may add, upon the evident demonstrations he hath already given, in the most remarkable instances, that *his mercies are sure,* and that he *keepeth truth for ever*[p].

For this *blessed and only Potentate,* this *King of kings, and Lord of lords, who only hath immortality, dwelling in the light which no man can approach unto, whom no man hath seen or can see, hath done great things for us already, whereof we are glad.* He hath sent his Son, after good men had long

[m] John i. 18. [n] Rev. i. 8. [o] [Ps. xcii. 15.]
[p] Acts xiii. 34; Ps. cxlvi. 6.

expected him; he sent him to do for them more than they expected[q]; he raised him up out of his grave, and made him Lord of all; he hath given him power to raise up us to eternal life (as appears by the gift of the Holy Ghost, which wrought in his apostles, and enabled them to raise the dead, and do many other wonders): his *judgments* also have already been *made manifest;* he hath in part *avenged the blood* of his servants[r], and *the kingdoms of this world are become the kingdoms of our Lord, and of his Christ*[s]. And therefore we may with a steadfast faith look for another appearing of our Saviour, when he will come in person to exercise this power himself (wherewith we see he is invested) so far as to *change our vile body, that it may be fashioned like unto his glorious body* (which then he will show to the world), *according to the working whereby he is able even to subdue all things unto himself*[t].

CHAP. V.

Containing the use we should make of what hath been delivered in the foregoing chapter.

I CANNOT think fit to pass on to what I further intend, without some short reflection upon so weighty a subject as this of which I have been treating. And therefore let us here pause a while, and consider how mightily all this should move us to worship and adore this blessed Potentate God the Father Almighty; to acknowledge with the humblest submission his supreme authority; to reverence, admire, and praise his most glorious perfections, who hath given us such a sure ground of faith and hope in him. For so St. Paul here concludes this incomparable description of him;—*to whom be honour and power everlasting. Amen.*

Which is not said to exclude the other two Persons in the holy and undivided Trinity from receiving our worship and service, (no more than the giving eternal glory to our Saviour in the next Epistle[u], and in other places, takes it away from the Father,) but only to remember us of a peculiar prerogative, which the holy Scripture alway ascribes to the Father

[q] 1 Cor. ii. 9. [r] Rev. vi. 10; xv. 4. [s] xi. 15. [t] Phil. iii. 20, 21. [u] 2 Tim. iv. 18.

Almighty, of being the Fountain and Beginning of all[x]; to whom it properly and peculiarly belongs to show this appearing of Jesus Christ. And therefore the apostle invites us, from the consideration of his most excellent majesty and absolute dominion, to acknowledge and confess him, to acknowledge and praise him; first, as worthy of all *honour*, worship, veneration, and service: because (secondly) he hath all *power* and authority over us and over all creatures; an independent uncontrollable power: and that (thirdly) *everlastingly* to be celebrated, not only by us, but by all that shall come after us to the world's end; nay, to be praised and magnified by saints and angels in heaven to eternal ages.

To this we should every one of us, together with the apostle, most heartily say *Amen*, Let be so; we give our consent unfeignedly to it, and wish from the bottom of our souls that all men would honour and submit unto this *blessed and only Potentate*, the *King of kings*, and the *Lord of lords*. What though no man ever saw him? nay, what though no man can see him? yet glory, honour and power is to be ascribed to him, because we see his works of wonder every where. The heavens and the earth declare the greatness of his glory; and from all things that we behold we learn his rich goodness, his infinite power, his immortal bliss, and that he is such a Potentate as the greatest kings and princes upon earth, nay, the highest thrones and principalities in heaven, ought to worship and obey with the greatest reverence. And much more is this due from us poor and inferior creatures; especially since he hath shown himself so gracious to us in our Saviour (the most excellent demonstration of his blessed nature and mighty love), and hath promised he shall appear once more in greater glory than ever; and hath taught us to believe, by all the notions we have of him, that he will never fail to make that promise good.

And as we ought to honour God the Father of all, so this naturally moves us (out of a particular obligation) to honour

[x] So Epiphanius observes, that the Scripture shows *μίαν εἶναι τὴν πηγὴν τῶν πάντων ἀγαθῶν, τουτέστι τὸν Πατέρα. Καθεξῆς δὲ τῆς πηγῆς . . ὧν μία πηγὴ ἐκ πηγῆς ὁ Υἱὸς*, &c. Hæres. lxix. num. 54. [tom. i. p. 776 D.] and Nazianz. Orat. xxix. p. 489, &c. [ed. Ben. orat. xx. § 7. tom. i. p. 380.]

and obey our Lord Jesus Christ, as the person whom this great Majesty will show in wonderful honour and glory at the great day.

This is the very reason (you must mark) wherewith the apostle backs his charge to Timothy to keep the commandment he gave him *without spot, unrebukable, until the appearing of our Lord Jesus Christ*[y]; because the *blessed and only Potentate* will certainly, in his own time, show the glory wherein he lives, by his appearing again in royal majesty in the sight of all the world. It concerns us therefore, as well as it did Timothy, to have an exceeding great regard to this most glorious person, whom God will so highly honour; and to take care that we behave ourselves so as to be unreprovable at that day. We must observe his commandments, that is, as exactly as we can, and endeavour to render ourselves as a beautiful body, without any spot and blemish, and thereby be found acceptable in his sight at his appearing.

And if you would know what commandments they were which he would have Timothy, in consideration of this appearing of Christ, and the certainty thereof, to *keep without spot*, you need but look back to the eleventh and twelfth verses, and there you may find them: *Follow after righteousness, godliness, faith, love, patience, meekness: fight the good fight of faith, lay hold on eternal life, whereunto thou art also called*, &c. That is, "shun covetousness, and all the vices that issue from it, ever rendering to every man what is his due: have God always before thine eyes, and put thy trust and confidence in him; deceive no man that relies on thy word; exercise mercy and charity to all; suffer wrongs rather than do them, and suffer them with a patient humble mind; bridle anger, repress all choleric motions; and use such gentleness to others as thou wouldst desire thyself in the like cases. And for this end, contend earnestly for the Christian faith; that is, suffer not thy faith in Christ to be shaken, much less overthrown, by any persecution, pain, or death itself. As thou hast begun to show thyself a good Christian, so continue. Remember thy calling and profession; and resolve to quit all thou hast rather than fall short of eternal life. And this I give thee

[y] 1 Tim. vi. 14.

in charge[z], as thou wilt answer it before God, who raises even the dead, and before our Lord Jesus Christ, who constantly professed the truth before Pontius Pilate, that thou keep these things inviolable, and endeavour to be found pure and holy when Christ shall appear again: as certainly he will; for we have his word for it; and God, the blessed and only Potentate, the King of kings, and Lord of lords, &c. is able and lives for ever to make it good."

These two uses, you see, the apostle plainly directs us to make of the doctrine here delivered. And there is a third, which he teaches us in the place I am now treating of, when he describes all good Christians who *keep the faith* by the name of those who *love this appearing* of Christ Jesus.

All they who observe the commandments of our Lord and Saviour with seriousness and care, ought to set their hearts upon this glorious appearing which they expect, as the most goodly sight, the most blessed spectacle, that eyes can behold. This is the very character, you see, that St. Paul gives of the faithful; and so it hath ever since been esteemed by all those who understood our religion: which disposes and inclines all those that heartily embrace it, and live according to it, to have a great affection for that happy day, which so many pious souls, through so many ages, have most passionately longed to see. So Andreas Cæsariensis hath most excellently expressed the sense of all right Christians, when he sets this down for the contents of the last chapter of the Revelation (according to the old division[a]), ὅπως ἡ ἐκκλησία, καὶ τὸ ἐν αὐτῇ Πνεῦμα, &c. 'how the church, and that Spirit which is in it, wishes for and desires the glorious appearing of Christ:' which will bring with it so transcendent a bliss, that they have little faith or little goodness, who do not not only wait for it, but rejoice in hope of it before it come. For when the apostle calls this appearing of Christ his *revelation* (saith an ancient writer in Œcumenius[b]), δίδωσιν αὐτοῖς μέγιστα προσδοκᾶν, καὶ ἥδεσθαι, &c. 'he bids them look for the greatest things, and please themselves in the very thoughts of his coming, before they receive the recompense of the reward.' For as his appearing will be infinitely affrighting

[z] 1 Tim. vi. 13. [a] Chap. lxxii. [ad calc. Œcum. tom. ii. p. 836.]
[b] In 2 Thess. i. 7. [tom. ii. p. 190 A.]

to the wicked, and they have reason to dread it beforehand; so it will be no less comfortable to the godly, who ought now to entertain themselves with delightful hopes of it, and fetch great contentment and consolation from it, because they shall then see and hear such things as will ravish their hearts with joy unconceivable.

That is the chiefest thing of all, and which is principally by me intended in these papers. Unto which therefore, without any further evidence that might be produced of the certainty of this appearing, I shall apply myself in the remaining third part of this discourse.

CHAP. VI.

Of the means to excite that LOVE in our hearts which we ought to have for Christ's APPEARING.

I HAVE passed over the other two with the greater speed, because I intend to take the more pains in this, by endeavouring to show, and to express as lively as I can, what the *love* is which we should bear to this *appearing*, if we hope to partake in the comforts of it. And how to do this better than by describing the original and progress of this passion, I cannot devise. And therefore I shall use that method for the conveying this appearing of Christ into your minds under such a notion and character as shall not fail to stir up in your heart the devoutest affection for it.

I.

Let it then, in the first place, be remembered, that there cannot be the least beginning of this love, unless we look upon the appearing of our Saviour as a *good*, and that of the greatest size. For else it will be so far from touching us with any inclinations towards it, that it will excite either our hatred or our contempt of it. It is the *good* which we discern in any thing that charms our souls and attracts our desires. Though an object be never so near us, and present itself to our very hands, and would thrust itself upon us; yet if we see no good in it, we either hate it for disturbing our quiet, or at least are perfectly cold to it, as feeling no power it hath to stir up any

passion for it. Nay, though we do perceive a thing to be good for us, and desirable to be enjoyed, yet if it stand at such a great distance, and seem so very far off, as the *appearing* of Jesus Christ for any thing we know may be, it will not sensibly affect our hearts, nor move us to bear much regard to it, unless it have the face of a very great happiness, and promise us exceeding much contentment.

This *appearing* therefore of our Lord is called by this apostle, in another place[c], *that blessed hope;* to express the incomparable happiness and bliss which it will bring along with it. He would have us look upon it as a thing that far more imports us than all our present enjoyments, or all that is possible to be here enjoyed: for there is nothing in this world that is worthy to be spoken of with such an emphasis, as to be called *that blessed thing*, that happy possession. This is a peculiar respect, belonging only to the appearing of Christ, which is the sum of all a Christian's hopes; and those hopes the great treasure of his soul.

When we so esteem it, and look upon it with such a regard as it is presented to us in the glass of God's word, immediately we shall feel our hearts begin to draw towards it. This is the first business of a devout Christian, who would *love* the appearing of his Saviour, to persuade his heart to have a respect to it, far above all other things. That blessed day, all pious hearts, who have any hope of his favour, should think of and look for as the brightest that ever shone. The coronation of a king, the triumph of a conqueror, the public applause in the Olympic games, the most famous shows that have ever been or can be made, are all (they must remember) but as so many little puppet plays in comparison with that grand spectacle. When all the world shall be in a gaze, when angels as well as men shall wonder and admire; when the sun shall blush to see itself outshone and overcome in brightness; when the hosts of blessed spirits shall be the only stars, and our great Lord the only Sun that appears in the firmament; when the righteous themselves shall shine in the same splendour, by the reflection of his rays upon them.

Thus we must discourse with ourselves continually, if we

[c] Tit. ii. 13.

would be sensible of our happiness, (as St. Chrysostom[d] advises those who would understand their high birth and nobility,) "We must look unto heaven, to the very throne, the royal throne; for there sits," says he, "the first-fruit of mankind. Who will come again, will certainly come again, leading all his hosts along with him: the legions of angels, the several squadrons of archangels, the societies of the martyrs, the quires of the righteous, the tribes of the prophets and apostles; and in the midst of these immaterial camps, the King himself will appear, *ἀρρήτῳ τινὶ καὶ ἀφράστῳ δόξῃ*, in a certain unutterable and inexpressible glory."

O dark house, or cave of earth, (will every one who believes this heartily be apt to say,) how willingly would I leave thee, if I might be transported to meet our blessed Lord thus royally encamped in the air! O poor world! How come I so far to value thee, as to suffer thee to captivate this heart? How glad should I rather be to see thee no more, if I might but behold him, whom my soul loveth, appear! Nay, it ought not to grieve me to see this earth and all things in it in a flame, if that celestial glory would but show itself. There is nothing here so dear which I should not choose to part withal most cheerfully for the sake of so great a blessedness.

Come, my friends and my relations, (the dearest goods in this world,) let us set our hearts on this, and desire to meet together with our Lord. Let our hearts be united in this love as much as they are in all things else. There is nothing we enjoy of such esteem but we ought to be content to see it vanish and disappear before that illustrious sight. Happy will that time be which shall eclipse all that beauty which now presents itself unto us with so much address. Blessed will be the day that shall put out the lustre of the whole world, which now so strangely dazzles our eyes. A great deal better will that moment be which shall dissolve, if God think good, all our stately palaces, than that which reared them and built them up.

Away, away, you trifling vanities. Why do you thus bewitch our eyes, and enchant our ears, and draw aside our

[d] Tom. v. orat. 1. in Pentecost. p. 608. [tom. ii. ed. Ben. p. 466 A.]

thoughts with your flattering enticements? Trouble us no more, you false or unsatisfying glories; but leave our minds free to think of that great and solemn day, when you must all be benighted, not by the want, but by an excess of light and brightness.

Awake, awake, and open thine eyes upon us, O thou sweet morning of our happiness. Arise, shine forth, O thou Sun of righteousness, and make us blessed with a sight of thy glory. Nay, it would content us more than if we had all the world, if we might but see the clouds break; if we could but behold the shadows of the night beginning to haste away; if thou, Lord, wouldst but dissipate these dark vapours that now encompass us, and cause the light of divine faith, as the day-star, to shine continually in our hearts.

II.

But hitherto we have only laid the foundation of love: which supposes moreover that we have some sympathy (as I may call it) with that which we apprehend to be so good for us; and that we take ourselves to be very much concerned in it: for there are some things that are excellent in themselves, to which, notwithstanding, we find little or no inclination, because they are not suitable to our dispositions, necessities, and desires. The greatest perfections and merits ofttimes meet with more admirers than they do vassals; and we see those every day who bow other hearts to their service, but find us inflexible to their attractions. As we have not an appetite to all sorts of meats, even those which we judge to be wholesome and good; so we have not an inclination to all persons and things, even those which we hold to be well deserving. We praise many things which we do not love. We allow divers objects our approbation which we cannot much affect. And that which, in reason, we needs must commend, yet doth not always command our hearts, and draw them to its embraces.

The loadstone, as is commonly observed, which draws iron to it, finds lead and copper to have no perception of its touches: and that face, as I said before, which betwitches some eyes, leaves others insensible of its beauty.

The love then which we contract with any good, arises from the convenience that is between us and it. We perceive an

agreeableness in it, either to our needs or to our nature, and thence affection springs. The likeness and resemblance that there is between two beings is not the only cause of their readiness to embrace each the other; but the correspondence also and proportion which the one bears to the other's necessities, is a sufficient ground of it. A man that languishes under a dangerous sickness may conceive a great affection for an incomparable and very compassionate physician, though there be no similitude between them, because he apprehends that sufficiency in him, which is able to supply the great defects and wants that are at present in himself. But when these two, correspondence and similitude, (which several have such power over the affections,) shall both meet together in one thing, so that what we want is that to which by nature we incline; it cannot fail to produce a love exceeding all other in entire union, ardency, and perpetuity. For how can we refuse to yield to that good (or what would we have more than that) which our hearts feel at once to bear a great resemblance to them, and to answer all or most of their needs? a good which is what we are, and what we would be too: a good wherein we see the image of ourselves in that perfection to which we desire to be advanced.

All they therefore who would be truly disposed to love the appearing of our Lord must have a deep apprehension of the meanness and vileness of this present state. They must be possessed with a serious sense of their many imperfections and great weakness in the best condition that this world affords; of the poverty and emptiness of all earthly enjoyments; yea, and of the scantiness and narrowness of all those divine participations which their souls are here capable to be blessed withal. And then the appearing of our Lord will seem a good so suitable to them, that they cannot choose but have the same affection for it that a crazy and diseased person hath to the most skilful physician: in hope that he will perfect their nature, cure the disorders under which they labour, supply their defects, fill their appetites, nay, enlarge their capacities, and raise them to a greater pitch of true goodness and bliss.

Let us suppose such persons to be so much in the favour of God as to have a liberal share even in the blessings of this world, as well as of those which are more peculiarly in the gift

of our Saviour Christ: yet it is impossible, one would think, they should be so much pleased in the highest dignities that can be conferred on them; in the rarest delicates that the bounty of nature or curiosity of art can provide for them; in the society of the choicest and dearest friends; or (I may add) in their own secret joy, though descending from heaven to them; as not to think still that it is far more desirable to see the Lord Jesus come to promote them and all their pious relations and friends to an incomparably better condition in his celestial kingdom.

It is their interest to have him appear again; and besides, they have such a likeness and resemblance to him, that the bent and inclination of their souls cannot but make them long after the sight of him, as a good more delightful and agreeable than any other. For there is another coming of Christ, before that which we expect, *quo per totum tempus in ecclesia sua venit. &c.* (as St. Austin speaks[e]) 'by which he comes, through all the time between his first appearing and the last, in his church,' that is, his members, *particulatim atque paulatim,* working 'in every one of them by little and little;' according to his promise, that if any man keep his commandments, he will look upon it as such a testimony of his love, that he will love that man, and the Father will love him; *and we will come* (saith he) *unto him, and make our abode with him*[f]. Now when we heartily entertain him, and he is so truly settled there, that we are made partakers of his blessed nature and disposition, and all the lineaments of him (if I may so speak) are drawn upon our hearts; we shall find them inclined to wish for the day when he will complete his work, and fill up the whole image of himself to the very life; and not only make us glad with the light of his countenance, but make us look perfectly like him, and entirely assimilate us to his own most blessed nature.

Do you not see how the holy Scriptures represent this appearing of Jesus as the most lovely of all other things; and therefore apt to draw our hearts with an irresistible force towards it? It is expressed there, I observe, under the character of that which is wont to touch the soul with such an agreeable stroke that it ravishes it from itself; I mean beauty. For as

[e] L. xx. de Civ. Dei, cap. v. [tom. viii. col. 577 F.] [f] John xiv. 21, 23.

that is nothing else, according to Plato, but the splendour and glittering of that which is good; so this appearing is set forth as exceeding bright, splendid and glorious, and as that which will make us so also; to the end we may be affected with it, as the most beautiful sight that ever was. Read Tit. ii. 13; Matt. xiii. 43. And St. Luke, I told you before, mentions a threefold glory wherein he will appear, *his own, his Father's, and his holy angels'* [g]; which is said, I believe, to make this day appear the more illustrious and amiable in our eyes.

The only visage of Scipio, we read, made him master of some barbarous nations; he piercing further into their hearts by his countenance than by his sword. And Heliogabalus, as bad as he was, was no sooner shown by his mother to the soldiers, but, from priest of the sun he became emperor of the world. Why then should not the beauty of that day, when the Prince of all the kings of the earth shall appear in the most glorious splendour, attended by the greatest principalities of heaven, with all their shining hosts, in admirable order, captivate the hearts of all those that love him; since there is none so powerful, did they but *behold his glory* (as the apostles did), and look upon him *as the only begotten of the Father, full of grace and truth*, to draw those to his religion who love him not? How can they refuse to yield to do him homage, and suffer themselves to be carried after him as the conqueror of all souls; and above all, desire to wait upon him at his appearing; which they discern will be so glorious and render them so amiable, that they will become (as I doubt not to show) a considerable addition to his triumphs?

The hearts of all the faithful cannot choose but leap for joy at the very thought of so great a good, though widely distant from them; and wish it would come nearer to make them happy by its presence with them. They are to sigh and say, when they deeply ponder these things, with the prophet David, in another case [h]:

O when wilt thou come unto me? It is a long time, O Lord, since thou didst promise to come. We have waited for thee and for thy salvation, more than they that wait for the morning; I say, more than they that wait for the morning. May I not

[g] Luke ix. 26. [h] Psalm ci. 2.

pray thee to hasten thy desired coming? O when wilt thou display thyself, and show thy glory more openly before us? O when wilt thou be pleased to impress thine own image more fairly on us? When shall those little touches that we have received of thee be perfected, and figured into a more exact resemblance of thy beauty?

We cannot refrain, but we must long to have all our defects supplied out of thy fulness; to have all spots wiped off our souls, to be rendered clear as the sun, free as the air, and as unstained as the pure influences of heaven. For how should we think, O blessed Lord, that we bear any love to thee, if we can be content to remain (as we are) so much unlike thee? There is none can see thee, and not ardently love thee. There is none ever beheld thy face, that was not impatient to be conformed to thee. None have tasted thy sweetness, who could be satisfied till they came to the fountain of it.

Therefore suffer us, good Lord, to beg some more of thee, since thou hast given us so much. Yea, suffer us to ask when thou wilt come and give us all, that so we may ask no more of thee. O how joyful will that time be, which shall make us so complete, that all our business will be to praise and thank thee! How comfortable will thy appearing be, which shall make us appear with thee!

O come, dear Saviour, that we may come to thee. Come, that we may so come to thee as to be for ever with thee.

CHAP. VII.

Two further steps in this love of Christ's appearing.

III.

Now when we feel our souls thus touched with any thing that seems very good and convenient for us, the first approaches of it beget a complacence in the heart, and give it a sense of no small joy and pleasure. For when the image, you may observe, of any good that imprinted itself is on the mind or imagination, it instantly endeavours to proceed further, and creeps into the heart, the will and affections; which cannot but turn themselves towards it, to feel what this is which shows so

fairly, and comes so kindly to salute them. Now when the heart thus looks about to see what it is that courts it, you shall find, if you mark it, that at the very first greeting it is entertained with a certain delight and pleasure; which this newcome guest brings along with it to invite us to it.

For if you examine things strictly, and with such a curious eye as some have done, you will perceive that this image which imprints itself upon us is of the same nature with light or any shining body. It casts, as I may say, its bright rays round about the soul; it disperses itself, by a kind of illumination, into the will and affections, that they may be sensible how amiable it is. Which when they are, the light is not more pleasant to the eyes than this is to the heart. It rejoices in this good which presents itself to its enjoyment, as a man doth in the welcome approach of an ancient friend; whom he is glad to see, but much more glad to feel in his arms.

And such is the contentment that the belief of Christ's appearing gives to all those who fix their thoughts upon it. It cheers and refreshes their spirits. It smooths their minds, and makes them so calm and still, that the halcyon days are but fabulous shadows of that rest and peace which then they feel in themselves. Their heart is entirely delighted and satisfied with this belief. It is so transported beyond itself with this comfortable persuasion, that it can easily overlook all other joys, when it lifts up itself in the contemplation of this incomparable blessedness. No music can then be so sweet to the ear as the sound of the trump of God. No beauty so fair to the eye as that glory which shall be revealed. No company so inviting and welcome to the heart as that great assembly of Christ, with all his holy angels.

And hark, O my soul, do they not call upon thee to cast a look that way, that thou mayest behold them in their surpassing glory? Listen a while, and hear if they do not say, We are preparing ourselves, and making ready to come for thee, and for all those that love his appearing. O hearken again, my soul, what is it they say to thee? Turn thyself about, and lift up thine eyes towards heaven, that thou mayest know what it is that is promised to thee.

Will thy Lord indeed come again in power and great glory?

Will he once more leave his heavenly place, and descend to call us up to himself? Shall we see him who loves us so much, and be transformed at the sight of him? O welcome news! When didst thou meet with any tidings like to this? which sheds such a sudden and transcendent joy and gladness abroad in thy heart, and prevents my forward thoughts, which were going to exhort thee to rejoice. What hadst thou lost, if thou hadst turned away thine eyes from this blissful sight! How great an happiness hadst thou been deprived of, if thine heart had not opened when the report of his coming knocked at its door!

But, O my soul, how sweet then will this appearing itself be, the hope of which is so delicious! How will that sight intrance us, the news of which, at this distance, is so comfortable to us! Into what raptures will it cast us, which now inspires such joy into our hearts? What a bright day will that be, which, through all the clouds wherein we are wrapt, spreads round about us such a cheerful light? If the representation of our Lord in the holy sacrament of his body and blood, and that but in his sufferings and low estate, give such satisfaction to the heart; what will the sight of himself do to us, and that when he appears in his glorious majesty, as the Lord of heaven and earth!

O sweet Jesus, come, and let us see what that majesty and glory is: come and draw aside the veil, do away the shadows, and present thyself as the King of glory before our eyes. They have long looked for thee. They would gladly know what it is to behold thee in thy glory. O how gladly would they understand what the meaning is of *thy coming in the clouds of heaven!* The brightness of them, we believe, is infinitely beyond all that eye ever saw. The thoughts of it revive our hearts, and make our faces shine. Our souls are drawn out, and run to meet thee, by the joy we have conceived at the promise of thy coming. Though we have not seen thee, yet we love thee; and though we now see thee not, yet believing, *we rejoice* (O that we could say) *with joy unspeakable and full of glory* [1].

O blessed Lord, do not deny to complete our joys by hastening thy coming to let us see thee. Come and fill our eyes,

[1] 1 Pet. i. 8.

which cannot here be satisfied with feeling. Come and show us thy glory. that we may say, *it sufficeth.* And let our hearts, in the mean time, rejoice in nothing so much as in the hope of thy glory. Let them always prefer this above their chiefest joy; and never wish for any thing with so much fervour as for thy coming.

IV.

Now from this pleasant sense which is excited in us by the appearance of any good to us, there naturally follows, not only a desire, but a vehement motion, and, as it were, an effusion of the heart, towards that which is so agreeable, and promises it so much satisfaction. Complacence, you must know, is but the beginning of love: for by that delicious pleasure which the heart feels when any good approaches, it is invited further; and even forced to pour forth itself upon that fair thing which presents itself so sweetly to it; and this is properly love.

As soon as ever we discover any thing that is suitable to us, we feel our hearts instantly struck with a secret joy, and are marvellously delighted in it. And this delectable touch is no sooner perceived, but it sweetly, yet strongly, draws us to go towards that thing which at first sight gave us such a pleasure, and will yield, we hope, a far greater, when we approach so near it as to get possession of it. Complacence or delight then is but the first stirring or motion which a good thing causes in our heart. This pleasing motion and agitation of the spirits is attended presently with a melting and, as it were, effusion of the heart, whereby we run out to meet that beloved object, and entertain it into our souls; and in this, as I said, properly consists the very being of love: which is so manifest in an heart duly affected towards the appearing of our blessed Lord, that there cannot be a greater proof of the truth of this description: for it feels so great a pleasure in the lively belief of his coming, that it is drawn thereby quite out of itself, and cannot choose but resign up itself entirely to that glorious Prince, that he may make it appear together with him. It easily dissolves in that heavenly warmth, and, losing all its power to contain itself in its former bounds, flows to him the Lord of life, as to its proper place. It is lifted up towards heaven, and would fain be there where he is, from whom this

pleasure comes. For with him is the fountain of life; and therefore where should a devout soul set *its affections but on those things which are above,* (as St. Paul speaks[k],) where Christ *sitteth at the right hand of God?* Which, when they mightily affect the heart, it feels as if it were dissolving into that *life which is hid with Christ in God.*

That future life or bliss is safe indeed, because it is in the custody of Christ, and in a glorious place where God dwells in light inaccessible. But who can abstain from desiring it should be no longer *hid* and reserved, but made manifest and shown, as it will be at the appearing of Christ? For so the apostle adds immediately, (as if he would answer their question who might ask, when shall this life be discovered?) *When Christ who is our life* (i. e. the cause of it, who will give us this life) *shall appear, then shall we also appear with him in glory.*

O what a joyful word is this! what should hinder an heart that is possessed with a full belief of it from running thither with all speed, whither it is called by so great a joy, as sent from thence into it? Into whose arms should it leap but only his, the expectation of whose appearing creates that exultation? There is none in heaven it can desire but him, with whom its life is hid; and whom is there on earth that it can desire besides him?

Come, saith such a soul to itself, and lift up thy head: thy Lord, I hear, is coming; let us arise and go and meet him. Let us leave this earth, and ascend up towards heaven, where he is who is our life. Let us raise up our dull thoughts thitherward; and fix our minds, as oft as we can, on the glory that shall be revealed.

Let us stir up ourselves, and with the most ardent desires and affections of our heart, get as near him as ever we are able. Let us go, O my soul, and at least make a present of our very heart to him; beseeching him most earnestly to possess himself entirely of it. Let us invite him to prevent his appearing, and to come a little beforehand to manifest himself unto us, and to take up his abode with us.

O blessed Jesus, let us say, who art our life, be intreated to

[k] Col. iii. 1—3.

come hither (now that we cannot come up to thee) and live in us. Show thyself in this soul, and let not me live any longer; but do thou live in me: let the life I live in the flesh be by thy faith, O thou Son of God. Thou hast loved me, and given thyself for me: O love me so much (I again beseech thee) as to live in me. I would begin that life which is hid with thee, in resigning myself to thee, that thy will may be done in me. Never did I feel such complacence in following mine own, as I have since I was inclined to follow after thee; who wilt lead me, I see, to immortal glory.

Blessed be that day which made me sensible of such happiness. Blessed be the day which directed mine eyes to look for thy appearing. What can I wish for more than to be blessed with the sight of it; and till it come, to have my heart always in love with it? I am going towards it by these desires; and I will excite myself to go the faster, because that blissful sight is still making nearer approaches.

What do we mean, my soul, to hang thus towards this earth? Why do we stay here when we see Jesus preparing himself to make another journey to us? Why do we not advance towards him, as if we were desirous to have him come, and to let us see him? Why do we not with all speed make ourselves ready to receive him? What is it that makes us so slow in our motions towards him; who, when he appears, will come as swift as the lightning unto us. Up, up, O my soul, let not thy Lord find thee, when he comes, posting after these worldly vanities, pursuing of thy sinful pleasures; but onward in thy way, gone very far in devout affections, ardent desires, and holy hopes to meet his glorious Majesty.

CHAP. VIII.

The progress of this love to Christ's appearing in three steps more.

V.

And yet this love cannot content itself with inward motions and aspirations of the soul towards the appearing of our Lord; but constantly excites all such actions as are requisite for the

attaining of so great a good. If we esteem any thing highly, and feel it exceeding agreeable to our heart's desire, we do not willingly rest in the pleasing passions it raises up in our hearts; but they carry us out in earnest endeavours to be owners of it. And the influence it hath upon us is so powerful, and it doth so strongly draw us after it, that it will not suffer any thing to put a stop to the current of our affections when they are issuing out unto it.

There are certain imperfect motions in our hearts, which we are apt to call *love,* that by no means deserve that name, being only a good liking of that which we do not yet truly love. They are called in the schools *velleities,* wishes and wouldings, as we speak; half a will which we feel for divers excellent things, but never come to any effect. The reason is, because the appearance of some extreme great difficulty, or the force of some contrary desire, either holds the soul in her course, (as she is moving towards them,) and beats her affections back again; or else turns the stream of them quite another way.

Love therefore is a generous vigour in the heart, which incites and strengthens it to fair and noble actions for the effecting its desires, though opposed by never so many enemies. It is called by some the fire wherewith the soul is clothed, which forces its way through all resistances: a certain ardour in us, which inspires us to worthy, though difficult, undertakings: an heroic passion, which makes us think nothing impossible that is needful to be done for the compassing the end at which it aims.

Thus then must our souls be carried, with such strong affections, towards the appearing of Christ, if we heartily love it. We must omit nothing that we know is required of us for the obtaining the blessings which it will bring unto us. We must bid all things stand aside that would impede us; and tell them they must pretend to no interest at all in us when we are in pursuit of so great a good. The love of which will soon reconcile us to the hardest duties; and endear to us the most self-denying courses. It will alter the countenance of sufferings, and make all the troubles of this life cast a kinder aspect on us. Nay, it will enable us to look death in the face with a cheerful heart: for it will present it to us in another shape,

and make the grave, that house of darkness, seem like the beautiful gate of the temple of God.

Whatsoever our Lord declares to be his pleasure, this will bid us do it; though we be undone by that means in all our temporal concerns. And when they tempt us to murmur and repine, to cry and lament at our parting with them: love will bid us be of good comfort; because this is the way to have a fair reception by our Lord, when he shall see we have quitted all for his sake. We cannot indeed keep them always if we would; yet such is his love, our faith tells us, that if we consent to forsake them beforehand upon his account, he will not suffer us to be losers by it: and therefore our love both to him and to ourselves prompts us not to stick at any thing which will be pleasing to him, though for the present it be harsh to us. It teaches us to reason as St. Peter doth: *Seeing all these things must be dissolved, what manner of persons ought we to be in all holy conversation and godliness; looking for and hasting unto the coming of the day of the Lord*[l]*?*

What manner of persons? Truly, such as are preparing a room in their hearts for their Lord. Such as hope then to complete their espousals to Christ; and therefore must *be holy and without blame before him in love*[m], and study nothing so much as to be found acceptable in his sight (who is the Lord of their hearts, and their very life); and to be nobly entertained by him, when he shall come again to receive his loving subjects up unto himself. *We have our conversation in heaven* (saith St. Paul), *from whence we expect the Saviour, the Lord Jesus Christ, who shall change our vile body, that it may be fashioned like unto his glorious body, according to the working whereby he can subdue all things unto himself.* For in all reason they that expect such a sight should fit themselves for it by a conversation suitable to the dignity to which they shall be then preferred. So Œcumenius, I remember, expounds these words of St. Paul to Timothy, when he answers the question, *who it is that loves his appearing*, in this manner, ὁ ἄξια πράττων ἀμοιβῶν χρηστῶν, 'he that doth things worthy of excellent recompences[n].'

Which if we love, it will not fail to raise us unto a heavenly

[l] 2 Pet. iii. 11, 12. [m] Ephes. i. 4. [n] [In 2 Tim. 8. tom. ii. p. 279 D.]

life. If we wait for him to come from heaven, it will lift up our hearts, and carry them thither. We shall disburden them of all carnal affections, and throw off the load of the cares of this world, that we may be light and airy, ready to fly up above, when he calls us, to be with him. We shall labour to cleanse and purify our souls as he is pure; to adorn them with his graces; and, in one word, *to put on the Lord Jesus*, that he may see himself in us when he comes.

And wilt thou come then, O blessed Saviour (are such souls apt to say)? may we confidently look for thee from heaven to be our Saviour? Why do we question it, since we have thy faithful word for it; who hast promised that we shall see thee as thou art, and be for ever with thee? O astonishing love! what riches of grace is this! Was it not enough that thou condescendedst once to come and save us; but that thou determinest to come again? Canst thou not satisfy thy love unless we be where thou art? And wilt thou leave thy seat in heaven to come and fetch us, rather than leave us here upon the earth?

O love, what is like unto thee? Thou hast a mighty power! who can understand the wonders that thou dost? O make it great in us, good Lord, as well as in thyself. Cause it to do marvels in our hearts, as it hath done in thine. Let our souls be unsatisfied till they come to thee. Call forth all their powers as thou hast done their desires, that they may restlessly move towards thee. Make them unwearied in well-doing, steadfast, unmoveable, and abundant in thy work; that they may not miss of thee.

O most gracious Lord, suffer nothing in this world to discourage these hearts, that have wholly given themselves to thee. Cease not still to excite and quicken them; since they have been already touched and awakened by thine omnipotent love. But preserve such a flame alive in them, that they may ardently follow thee. Inspire them with zealous resolution, never to desist in their pursuit of that blessed hope thou hast set before them. Strengthen them against all the power of their enemies; and let thy love burn with such fervour in them, that none of the opposers of their holy desires may be able to stand before it. Arm them, good Lord, with this invincible

force of heavenly love, which may make them noble conquerors, and prepare them for thy glorious triumph.

VI.

But true love cannot stay here neither; nor content itself with some endeavours to enjoy that good which propounds itself to its affections; for it ever tends to an union with that lovely thing towards which it is moved. When the soul runs forth to see what it is that calls out its desires, the intention of that motion is to possess itself of that amiable object; if it answer its first pretences, and prove such as it promised. No sooner doth any thing appear beautiful and lovely to the mind or imagination, but presently the heart sends messengers (as I may call the spirits that issue out of it) to bring it home, and conduct it to take up its lodging there. This is the meaning of that effusion of the soul which I spoke of before; whereby it would dissolve itself into that which it loves, and be so mingled as to become perfectly one with it.

When an agreeable object, I told you, hath imprinted its image on the mind, it casts a certain light into the soul, and shines so comfortably on the affections, that they are powerfully warmed and excited by it. Now when the heart is full of this splendour, it doth not satisfy itself with those rays and emissions of light and heat which are imparted to it; but strives to unite itself to the very centre of it, and would feel the spring from whence such life and pleasure flows.

Just as iron, when it is impregnated with the virtue of the loadstone, is not contented with those effluxes it hath received, but moves towards the body from which they stream; so is it with an heart which receives this joyful news from our Lord, that he will appear again in glory. It amuses not itself in those delightful thoughts; it sits not down in those ravishing joys; nor thinks it enough to be melted in the passion of love to him, and to so great a blessedness; but it seeks to knit itself to the very mind and spirit of Christ, that it may feel how blessed he intends to make it. It studies, I mean, to be changed and transformed more and more into his likeness; and by an entire agreement of will with his will, to begin its transfiguration, and be prepared for a perfect and eternal union with him.

It is not sufficient to a heart that is in love with that great day, to live in a constant expectation of it, (which is excited by

the revelation he hath made of it in his gospel, and is the light which he now sends from heaven into us:) but it would gladly *prevent*, as I have already noted, that happy time, by feeling him appear every day more gloriously there. It longs to shine more clearly in the light of his heavenly knowledge; to burn more brightly in the ardours of his love; and by being more richly adorned with the graces of his Spirit, to be recommended to all in the beauty of his holiness.

There is nothing can better explain all that hath been hitherto said than the example of the loadstone, which I just now mentioned. As soon as a piece of iron feels the power of it, we see how it turns itself towards it; and by its quivering declares the complacence and pleasure (as we may call it) that it takes in its touches[o]. Then we behold how it creeps a little towards it; still advancing and bearing itself more and more that way, till it come to join itself with that thing from whence it first received those inclinations. Here you have all the parts of love, that have been already mentioned, most lively represented. First, the mind apprehends, and is made sensible of some good, which communicates an image or picture of itself unto it. Then the heart is secretly surprised with a certain delight, by which the agreeableness of that image entices it from itself. And thence it moves towards it, and goes to see it. And at last, when it finds it to be what it appeared, it flies, as I may say, into its embraces, and endeavours to knit itself so fast unto it, that they may never hereafter be divided.

And just such like is the temper of that soul which heartily loves our Lord's appearing. Which it perceives to be a happiness so great, that it cannot be satisfied with any entertainment it finds in this world, but presses forward to the blessed sight of him in all his glory. Nothing can quiet it, nor hinder its motion, till it become one spirit with him. All that it hath as yet attained, all the wisdom wherewith it is filled, all the joys of piety which it sometimes feels, are little and inconsiderable in comparison with what it desires to feel. And therefore on it proceeds in a serious study to be more like him; out of a design never to cease its earnest endeavours till it come to be for ever with him.

[o] [Jeremy Taylor makes an equally beautiful use of the same simile; Duct. Dubit. book iv. chap. i. vol. x. p. 552.]

O thou great and most magnetic good (should every pious heart say), O thou sovereign attractive of all souls; I feel myself wonderfully touched by thee. Thou hast put my spirit, which was foolishly wandering after other things, in a settled motion unto thee. O what an inclination hast thou awakened in my heart to be with thee! Thou hast mightily stirred all the powers of my soul, which is wholly turned about, to look most earnestly towards thee.

O cease not to shine perpetually into this cloudy mind, which is all in darkness without thee. Cease not to invigorate this dull and sluggish spirit, which is thus excited by thee. O spare not those mighty effluxes of thy love; but draw me still after thee. I cannot be willing to stand at any distance from thee; nor to stop my progress till I be closely united to thee. Therefore still continue to make me feel thy power, till I be so happy as to move no more, but to rest in thee.

Couldst not thou be pleased, O blessed Lord, with any thing less than an union with such sinful flesh as this of ours is? would it not suffice thee to look down from heaven upon us, and show us a glimpse of thy glory; but thou must come also and dwell among us; and make thyself to be bone of our bone, and flesh of our flesh, that we might be one with thee? How can I be contented then only with looking up unto thee? How should I be satisfied if I have nothing more, but merely some glances from thee? O most gracious Lord, give me leave to imitate thy love. Suffer me to desire and seek to become what thou art, by being perfectly transformed into thy likeness. And do not think it too great a presumption, if I wish and long to be so united to thee, my love, as to be for ever with thee.

Let me have the happiness at least to sigh and mourn after thine appearing. Affect my heart so sensibly with it, that I may groan in spirit (if I can do no better) for that blessed time when I shall lose the sight of thy face no more; when I shall lie under the warm beams of the light of thy countenance; when I shall live in the very element of love; when I shall be so near thee, that I shall feel myself to move in the very same orb with thee, thou bright Sun of righteousness.

I seem now, alas! to be a great way off from thee. I feel myself like the cold earth in the winter, which turns towards the sun, and looks upon that glorious light of heaven, that

great lover of all the world; but, alas! is very far removed from its comfortable rays. O that I might be so happy as to approach nearer to thee! O that I were fixed, and might never turn about any more from thee! Let the time come that there shall be no more night, but a perpetual day with me. O hasten the time when I myself shall shine like the sun in thy celestial glory!

VII.

Now, in the mean time, till love come to a perfect union, as it is incessant in its motion, so it grows more vehement in its desires and endeavours. For as frequent agitations make the fire burn more fiercely, so doth the stirring of this passion make it break out with a brighter flame. The desire of union increases the swiftness of its motion; and the more speed it makes, the nearer it is like to come to its desired union. And, which is very considerable, the more earnest and assiduous our motion is towards any good, the greater hopes we have that we shall enjoy it; and the greater our hopes are, the more are we still pricked on and spurred forward in the pursuit of that which we would fain enjoy.

A thing which is of exceeding great moment in this pious and devout love of Christian people. For without a *good hope* (which St. Paul saith our Lord, *who is our hope*, hath given us[o]) our motion would slacken, if not be extinguished. We should have no heart to prosecute our design, but let it fall immediately, if it were not *in hope of eternal life, which God, that cannot lie, hath promised*[p]. As, on the contrary, by the help of this sure and certain hope our diligence is doubled, and such oil poured on our wheels as makes them move not only more easily, but with greater speed and quickness also.

All the lovers therefore of Christ's appearing are said to *wait* for it, to *expect* it, and to *look* for the coming of *that blessed hope*, as you shall see in the conclusion of this argument, from those well-known places, Phil. iii. 20, Tit. ii. 13, and many other. And if you examine the holy Scriptures carefully, you shall find that this is comprehended in the love we ought to have for his appearing, being such a natural effect of love, that they are put indifferently the one for the other; as

[o] 2 Thess. ii. 16; 1 Tim. i. 1. [p] Tit. i. 2.

may be seen by comparing these two places together, 1 Cor. ii. 9. with Isaiah lxiv. 4: in the former of which the apostle says the things which surpass our conception are prepared by God *for them that love him;* and in the other the prophet saith he hath prepared them *for him that waiteth for him.*

Just as the people of Israel praying without the sanctuary (in the court to which they were confined) waited for the priest when he should come from the altar of incense, or rather for the high priest, on the day of atonement, to return from the most holy place and the ark of the covenant, to bestow the blessing on them; so do all good souls, who are devoted sincerely to the service of Christ, while they remain in this outward court, (the earth wherein we dwell, which is at a great distance from the heavens,) look up to the holy place, where *Jesus the great high priest of our profession is*[q], and wait for the time when he will come forth to bless them, saying, *Come, ye blessed of my Father, inherit the kingdom prepared for you from the beginning of the world*[r].

They cannot but frequently cast their eyes and turn their hearts that way, as the place of their rest, which he is gone before to prepare for them. They are ever calling upon their souls to *follow hard* after their dear Saviour, as David says[s] his heart did after the enjoyment of God in his sanctuary. For this they seek, as he there speaks, with thirsty desires, *to see his power and his glory*, so as they have never yet seen him, nor can see him; no, not in their nearest approaches to him, while they live in these earthly tabernacles. They wish therefore he would come and bless them with a clear and full sight of him. After this their desires grow daily more ardent; and they endeavour to stir up stronger and more affectionate motions towards so great an happiness. They are apt to cry out, saying, *Draw us, and we will run after thee;* yea, we will fly; we will take the wings of an eagle (in our passionate desires), that we may mount up aloft, and get more and more above this world to be with thee.

And this gives them good hopes likewise that they shall be with him; insomuch that they cannot but say,

[q] Heb. iii. 1, and iv. 15. [r] Matt. xxv. 34. [s] Ps. lxiii. 8.

O blessed Jesus, thou hast set our souls into a longing for thee, and now they cannot cease to desire to come to thee. Thou hast made us believe the most excellent surpassing glory wherein thou shinest; and ever since we cannot choose but look towards it, and wish to behold thee in that glory. If we be very earnest for this sight, if our souls sigh and say, *O when shall we come and appear before thee*[t]*?* we do but return thine own breath, who hast inspired us with these desires after thee.

And may we not hope to come thither where thou art, when thou thyself attractest our souls to thee? Wilt thou not satisfy those longings, which not we, but thou hast raised in our hearts? Give us leave to remember thee of what thou thyself hast said, who didst pronounce those *blessed who have not seen, and yet have believed*[u]. O let it be unto thy servants according to thy word; for we are such believers as thou hast blessed. We never saw thee, and yet believe *thou camest forth from God, and art gone to God*[x]*; and art most high in the glory of the Father, God blessed for evermore*[y]. Do not our hearts cleave unto thee, though they have only heard of thee? Are not our eyes continually towards thee, though they have never yet beheld thee? Thou wilt not always, sure, absent thyself, but turn our faith at last into a sight of thee.

For what is the *blessedness* of which thou spakest, and hast faithfully promised to such believers? Is it not that they shall one day behold thy glorious face, and reign with thee in thy glory? is it not that thou wilt manifest thyself unto them here, and at last appear again to take them to thyself, that they may live where thou art? O, dear Saviour, as thou hast made us to *believe* in this manner, so make us likewise thus *blessed;* as we have received thee though we have not seen thee, so let this be the reward of our receiving thee, that we may see thee. We will hope thou wilt make us thus happy, as thou hast made us thus faithful. We will expect till thou makest us see what thou hast promised, as thou hast made us do what thou hast commanded. We will rejoice in hope of thy glory; and do thou make our joy to be full; yea, bring us unto thee, and bid us enter into the joy of thee our Lord.

[t] Ps. xlii. 2. [u] John xx. 29. [x] xiii. 3. [y] Rom. ix. 5.

CHAP. IX.

This love to the appearing of our Lord further described in three other fruits or marks of it.

VIII.

And now can any soul choose but think of that perpetually which it most dearly loves? Doth not every good use to present itself continually to the mind that is enamoured of it, and remember us of its beauty? There is no question to be made of it. The very ardency of our affection for it doth more imprint and engrave it on our mind; and when, by any participation of it, we feel how good it is, we press it harder, and sink it deeper into our hearts. There is no man, for instance, who hath settled his love upon an agreeable person, but he finds the image of that friend always before his eyes: it accompanies him every where, and cleaves inseparably to his thoughts: it is a great part of his pleasure to entertain himself with the shadow of that in which he hath lodged his heart.

And therefore if we love the appearing of our Lord, we shall solace ourselves often with the kind. *In the multitude,* especially, or tumult *of our thoughts within us,* (as the Psalmist speaks,) *the comforts of it will delight our souls*[z]. We shall be daily calling upon them, and exhorting them to look towards it, and to fix their thoughts and affections upon it. We shall be inclined to say, as the voice is in the Song of Songs, *Come, my fair one, come away.*

O my chiefest good, what shall I desire or wish for so much as for thy coming? What is it that I ever saw which should detain my eyes from thy incomparable beauty? or where can I expect to satisfy their hunger, but only with the filling sight of thee, at thy appearing? The spacious heavens hope to be filled with the majesty of thy glory. The sun is but a weak image of thy brightness, and will be content to go out to make room for thee when thou appearest. All the stars of light are ready to resign their places, and leave the sky to be illuminated by thee alone. Whatsoever is lovely, and surprises us with its

[z] Psalm xciv. 19.

beauty here, confesses it is but thy shadow, and that when thou breakest forth it must disappear.

Fix my mind therefore upon thy glory, and let it henceforth employ my busy thoughts. Possess thyself, O Lord of life and glory, entirely of this heart, which hath been too long estranged from thee. Impress such a lively sense of thee and of thy glory there, that I may sooner forget myself than thee and thy appearing. Make it my greatest pleasure to sit hours and days and years to think of thy so much desired coming. When I meet with my dearest relations and friends, let nothing entertain us with such delight as to think of being *caught up together in the clouds, to meet the Lord in the air.*

Let us love to *speak of the glory of thy kingdom, and to talk of thy power; to utter abundantly the memory of thy great goodness, and to sing of thy righteousness.* Let us wish with united hearts *to see thy power and glory,* and to behold thee coming, according to thy faithful promise, out of thy heavenly sanctuary. Let it be our sweetest joy to inspire each other's hearts with these holy hopes, and to stir up one another to love and to good works. And when thou comest, O Lord, may every one of us be found so doing.

IX.

These are some of the pantings of an heart which loves and bears in mind the appearing of Christ. For, to say the truth, love is the original and source of all the passions that we feel in our hearts. They all flow from this as from their spring-head. They are but several motions which have their rise from love: or, if you will so conceive it, nothing but different figures and shapes wherein it appears. It is love which fears, and love which grieves, and love which hopes, and love which rejoices: there would be none of these were it not for some good which we love; to which these and all the rest of their kindred owe their birth and nourishment. When this is hindered in its designs, it breeds anger, or impatience, or fear, or sadness, or some such like commotion: and when this succeeds and prospers in the pursuance of its ends, their arises hope, and contentment, and joy and gladness, as the natural issue of it.

They that love then Christ's appearing will fear nothing so

much as to lose the blessedness which he will bring along with him. Nothing will excite such a displeasure in their hearts, as that evil which would rob and defraud them of his favour at that happy day. And what is there that can give them such a touch of sadness, as the thought that they are so far distant from their dearest Lord? Or what can create such joy, such exultation of spirit, as to hope they shall one day see him, so as never to part from him any more? In one word, all the passions of their souls will run this way, and be concerned for nothing so highly as this, that they may be *presented faultless before the presence of his glory with exceeding joy.*

True indeed, O blessed Saviour, (doth such an heart meditate in itself,) I have had a thousand fears in my breast. I have dreaded every small danger in this world, as if it would prove my utter ruin. The terrors that have affrighted me are as innumerable as the things I have fancied to be my happiness. But now all these are willing to be gone, that they may make way for one greater fear; lest I should not enter with thee, when thou appearest, into thy rest. O prevent so intolerable a mischief! Whatsoever I lose, I shall account myself a gainer if I lose not the blessing which thou wilt give us. Take all if thou pleasest, I am content, so thou wilt give me a share in thy glory when thou comest.

I have been too long pestered with a world of sensual passions. Sometimes sadness hath oppressed me, and then anger hath set me all on fire. Now vain joys have swelled my heart and puffed me up; and again they have given place to grief, and sorrow hath shrunk up my soul, and dried up my spirit. Fears and hopes have tossed me up and down as in a tempestuous sea. A small matter hath created me much trouble; and I have longed for things, which promised much, but gave me little satisfaction. What a comfort is it but to expect the day which will settle and compose these tumults in perpetual peace and quiet! I feel the thoughts of it already appeasing my spirit, and bringing a calm into my breast. And if the brightness of thy appearing did but always shine in my mind, it would dispel all the clouds and scatter the darkness wherein all this confusion reigns. O let the splendour of that day irradiate my soul even at this distance from it; and leave no space

void of its light and comfort. Yea, let it eclipse all other joys; and by its glistering beauty cause the small contentments of this world to seem but as so many glow-worms, which shine only in the night. I am sensible how short the sweetest enjoyments of this life are of that celestial happiness. The society of my Saviour and of the inhabitants above, O how much is it to be preferred, even before the delightful company of those that most deserve my love! who can do me no greater service than, by the innocent passion I have for them, to transport me with far greater to that blessed country where I shall enjoy them without fear, and love them without danger. And O that all the fears I at any time have of losing the dearest creature in this world may presently expire into a greater fear of being separated from my Lord. Let all my hopes and joys also about that conclude in better hopes and joyful expectations of living together in the joy of our Father's house.

But as for other things, I discharge and renounce you, all you frivolous sinful delights. I am not afraid of any evil that man or other creature can do unto me, while my trust and my joy is in the Lord. Come troubles, come reproaches, come loss of goods; I am not angry at it, so Jesus will but come: and they will also excite me to fasten mine eyes more steadfastly on him and his appearing. This is my hope, this is my joy, this is the support and the satisfaction of my heart. This is the thing I am resolved to entertain my thoughts withal: and if I may but have this, let all the rest, O blessed Jesus, be even as thou pleasest.

X.

I have but one thing more to add, which is, that the love which deserves this character is a settled constant affection; an habit and temper of the soul which always abides: not a sudden fit of passion, but a fixed inclination and rooted disposition to seek such a good as it desires. And so the word here used by St. Paul signifies, not barely *they that love*, but *they that have loved* his appearing. For ἠγαπηκόσι, being in the time perfectly past, denotes that this hath been the steadfast bent of their hearts to look for Christ, and prepare themselves in this manner for his coming.

The image of any lovely person, when it first presents itself

before us, is wont to come in a posture of humility and submission; and seems to crave to be admitted into our hearts. It invites us with so much sweetness and respect, as if it would be beholden to us for our kind acceptance of it into our favour. But when it is once passionately entertained, and hath possessed itself of our hearts, we find it changes its behaviour, and grows so imperious, that it requires what before it seemed to entreat. It becomes absolute master of our hearts; and placing itself there as the governor of all our affections, will no more be denied in any of its demands.

And such is the progress of the love of Christ, and his appearing in pious souls. He comes and entreats us at the first, or rather beseeches us that we would be so sensible of his kindness as to let him have a room in our hearts, and to receive from his hands so great a good as he offers to bless us withal. We feel thereupon only some inclinations to him, and good affections for him; but do not come presently to a full resolution to surrender ourselves entirely to him. Nay, it is too manifest that we are off and on, (as the phrase is,) and seem as if we could choose whether we will love him or no. But when he hath once got within us, when we perceive how gracious the Lord is, and have opened our hearts to let him dwell there, then he exercises an absolute empire over us. He will have none of his commands refused or disputed. A ready and cheerful compliance with his will is the fruit of his authority: and nothing can have a room there but what shall ask him leave. He rules and reigns over us in so sovereign a manner, that he carries us whither he pleases. And more than that, it pleases us to be ruled by him, and it is the most perfect liberty to be under the uncontrollable power of his love. All the world cannot hinder him from being obeyed; but every signification of his will and pleasure to us becomes a law as strong as fate, which cannot be resisted. Let him ask what he will, it is sufficient that he is pleased; and that he loves us so much as to think of appearing again to make us perfectly like himself.

That is a good incomparably great, which needs nothing to procure our love to it, but only to be known: and when it is loved, needs nothing to secure it, but not to slip out of our mind. Or rather, we cannot forget what we have once so dearly

loved. The pleasures of that passion are its preservation. Its activity and force will not let it die or fall asleep.

O come, come, saith a soul possessed with this love, for I cannot wish for any thing like thy appearing. It is impossible I should refrain from desiring that joyful day. I cannot live, but I must long for thy coming. O when wilt thou come, my blessed Redeemer? when wilt thou come? when shall we see that welcome morn that shall bring the news of thine approach? It cannot but be most welcome sure to all those that have waited for it with so much patience, and cried out so often, *Make no long tarrying, O my Lord.* The brightness of thy face, I know, can throw no scorching flames into those eyes that look for thee. That sweet sun will arise with a smiling countenance upon all such hearts. They can never fear an evil day, when the Bridegroom comes, most gloriously decked, to complete his love to them. And therefore I cannot but say again, (and let all them that love thee join their desires with me, and say continually) Come, come, O blessed Jesus. Come while our hearts are warm with love to thee. Come while these passionate sighs are calling for thee. Come now that these souls stand open with outstretched arms to receive thee.

What greater felicity can we wish than to pass away in such aspirations towards thee? What gentler or sweeter breath than these holy desires can waft our souls into the air to meet thee? Who can fancy any thing more desirable than to evaporate, all together, in ecstasies of devout affections to thee? Happy were it for us if our hearts were screwed up to such a pitch of love, that we needed no other instrument but that to crack those strings that tie our souls to our bodies. Happy were it for us, if in such a fiery chariot we might be transported unto thy heavenly mansions. We can conceive no greater pleasure than this, to expire in such ardent flames into thy bosom, there to rest for ever in thy love.

CHAP. X.

All this shown to be the sense of the holy Scriptures.

THUS have I put an end to the third inquiry about the nature of this *love*, which St. Paul supposes good Christians feel in their souls to the appearing of Christ. In satisfying of which, I have not followed mine own fancy, but the common sentiments of all those hearts who have so much good nature as to know what this passion means. And there hath been nothing said but what may be fully justified by the holy Scriptures, if we diligently observe in what terms they speak of the passion and fervent desire which all pious believers have for the coming of our Lord.

I.

For which, they are, first, said to *look*, or to expect it, with such a greediness as men do that of which they are extremely desirous. So those words ἀπεκδέχεσθαι and προσδέχεσθαι signify, which are used in the 1 Cor. i. 7, Phil. iii. 20, Tit. ii. 13, Heb. ix. 28, where they are said to *look* for the revelation of Jesus Christ; to have their conversation in heaven, from whence they *look* for the Saviour; to be *looking* for that blessed hope, the coming of Christ, who will appear the second time to them that *look* for him: with that earnestness, that is, and concernment which one hath for the greatest good in the world: or with such a longing (as I have explained it before) as the children of Israel had to see their high priest return out of the most holy place, into which he went on the day of expiation, to make reconciliation for their sins. For if he came out alive, it was a token that God had accepted him; and with the greatest joy they received the blessing which then he brought and pronounced to them in his name.

There is a manifest allusion to this in the last of those places now mentioned[a]; where the apostle saith[b], that when Christ appeared in this world, it was *to put away sin by the sacrifice of himself*. Which bloody sacrifice, as you read[c], he carried

[a] Heb. ix. [b] Ver. 26. [c] Ver. 24.

not into the holy places made with hands (*which were only figures of the true*): *but into heaven itself, now to appear in the presence of God for us*: that is, by virtue of this sacrifice to perfect the expiation of our sins, and obtain for us the divine blessing. Now he being thus offered *to bear the sins of many*[d], (as a public sacrifice, that is, for the whole body of mankind; not a particular, for one or a few persons,) *unto them that look for him he shall appear* (visibly) *the second time without sin*, (as having made a complete expiation,) to give *salvation* to his people, who expect his coming out of heaven to bless them.

II.

Expect it, did I say? yea, this apostle calls it a most *earnest expectation*. So the ἀποκαραδοκία *of the creature*[e] is expounded by Œcumenius[f] to be its exceeding intense and vehement desire and expectance of the revelation of the sons of God; "that is," says he, "of the conclusion of all, when it shall be clearly seen who are the sons of God, and who the sons of the devil." Which is a good to be wished for so much above all other, that "the heaven, the earth, the sea, the air, the sun, the moon, all the visible creation; together with all that is invisible, the angels, archangels, powers, principalities, dominions; all these expect our perfection." They are the words of Theodoret[g], who (with other of the ancients) looks upon the whole creation as brought in here, expecting our future happiness, by such a figure[h] as the prophets use when they introduce the woods rejoicing, the mountains leaping, the floods clapping their hands, to express the exceeding great joy that should be among mankind at the first coming of our Lord. But because it is controverted what the apostle means by *the creature*, and this is not a fit place to discuss it, I shall pass by this expression, and not mention the *sighs* and the *groans* which there follow as the natural effect of an exceeding great desire to see the day of redemption come.

[d] Heb. ix. 28.

[e] Rom. viii. 19.

[f] Ἐπιτεταμένη καὶ σφόδρα προσδοκία. [in loc. tom. i. p. 308 D.]

[g] [In loc. tom. iii. p. 87.]

[h] Προσωποποιΐα δέ ἐστι τὸ πᾶν. Œcum. [ubi supra.]

III.

Let us rather consider that the glory which shall be revealed at the coming of Christ out of this holy place to give salvation to his faithful worshippers, is the cause, that, as St. Paul speaks in this place, (which I have taken for the rise of this discourse,) they look for it as a thing that hath very strongly engaged their hearts, and is the object of their dearest affection. They declare, by the fixing of their eyes upon it, how much they love it; that is, esteem it, are inclined to it, and think long till they enjoy it. For whatsoever touches us so nearly, we are wont to expect it with some impatience.

IV.

But as the greatness of this good is such as will make those that believe it earnestly long for it, so it is able to quiet and still their souls by the mere hope of its enjoyment; though it stay long before it come. And therefore (4) they are said to *wait for his Son from heaven*[i], *ἀναμένειν*, 'to tarry,' 'to stay' till he come. Which implies both longing and patient abiding till he please to send so great a blessing.

V.

Nay, fifthly, St. James exhorts them to be *patient* with long-suffering *to the coming of the Lord*[k]. For so the word *μακροθυμήσατε*, there used, imports, a 'patient biding,' though he stay long, and we suffer much before he come. We could not suffer and endure what we must on some occasions, if we did not expect him (as Œcumenius notes out of the ancient Greek expositors[l]): and our sufferings would not be very valuable, if we were not content to expect him long, as he likewise observes upon another place in that Epistle[m]. For if it were manifest, saith he, that *the day of the Lord*, or the consummation of all things, would be within three years, and it could not be otherwise, all would despise dangers, and make nothing of them: *ὅπερ ποία ἀρετή*; '*and what great virtue would this be*,' when they knew that within so short a space they should receive

[i] 1 Thess. i. 10.
[k] Ver. 7.
[l] In 1 Thess. i. 10.—*Εἰ γὰρ μὴ τοῦτον ἀναμένετε, οὐκ ἂν τοσαῦτα ὑπεμένετε.* [tom. ii. p. 155 A.]
[m] In 1 Thess. v. 2. [p. 177 A.]

their full reward? The virtue of a Christian is to suffer long, as well as to suffer much, waiting with long patience, as the husbandman doth for the precious fruit of the earth.

VI.

And yet it is not such a patience we are to exercise, but St. Peter gives us leave *to hasten it;* which is a sixth word whereby the holy writings express this pious affection unto and vehement desire of the appearing of Christ Jesus: *Looking for, and hasting unto, the coming of the day of God*[n]. In the Greek it is not *hasting unto the coming*, but *hasting the coming*[o], (and so we render it in the margin,) that is, in our wishes, most ardent longings and gaspings for it. For so that phrase is observed to be used by good authors; in which, σπεύδω τὸ σὸν ἀγαθὸν signifies, 'I wish thy good:' so heartily, that is, that I would make it fly hither, if I were able, as swift as my desires.

VII.

This declares the highest passion they had for it: looking upon themselves as imperfectly happy, till they and their Saviour met together at his coming. Only they had a *perfect hope* of it, which was an exceeding great comfort to them. So St. Peter also expresses it, (which is the next word,) *hope to the end;* or rather, (as the translation in the margin renders the Greek τελείως ἐλπίσατε,) *hope perfectly:* and with very good reason; because of *the grace that is to be brought unto you at the revelation of Jesus Christ*[p]. There are great favours to be then bestowed, most ample rewards to be distributed; which may justly make us value the hope of them more than all the present possessions of this world; and rejoice before we have them, that he hath given us such solid and firm grounds of hope one day to receive them. Which whosoever understands, as he ought to live upon that hope, and support himself with a perfect trust in him that lives for ever to make good his promise; so he cannot but desire and pray continually to see it accomplished.

[n] 2 Pet. iii. 12. [o] Σπεύδοντας τὴν παρουσίαν. [p] 1 Pet. i. 13.

VIII.

Which is the last thing they cry unto our Saviour and call upon him; beseeching with fervent desires that he would *come*. So some understand those words[q] to be the voice of Christian people, not inviting strangers to come and embrace their religion, but earnestly inviting our Saviour Christ to come to perfect their happiness. In this they all agreed, *The Spirit* (that is, prophetical persons, endowed with the most eminent gifts of the Holy Ghost) *and the bride*, (that is, the whole body of the church,) with one consent, *say, Come*. And they exhort all others who should read this, and receive Christianity, to join with them in these prayers; for so it follows: *let him that heareth say, Come*. 'And let every soul (that is their conclusion) who thirsts after divine knowledge, especially of future things, come and read this prophecy; and partake of that refreshment, that water of life, which is here freely offered to him.'

But if that verse should have another meaning, yet it is certain that St. John himself (who was a fit pattern to all those who believed his book) concludes all his visions with a prayer to Christ that he would hasten his coming. For when our Lord had said, *Surely, I come quickly*[r], he answers *Amen* to this promise; and echoes back his own words to him: *Even so*, (let it be so,) *come, Lord Jesus*. Thy word is all our wishes. There is nothing so desirable as that thou wouldst come and fulfil thy gracious word.

It will be very fit then for us, who are come a great deal nearer to the day of the Lord, to descend down into ourselves and see what passions we have like to these which were of old in Christian breasts. Let us call ourselves to a strict account, and examine whether we be in the number of those thirsty souls that have this hearty affection for the appearing of Christ. It is safe for us to feel the pulse of our souls, and by these tokens make a judgment of them, whether they beat heavenward or no. What is it, may every one say to himself, what is it that I most admire, and holds the principal place in my esteem? On what is it that I have fixed my mind and set

[q] Rev. xxii. 17. [r] Ver. 20.

mine heart? What is the chiefest loadstone of my affections, and whither doth the main current of them run? To what is it that my actions are addressed? What is my hope, and the strength and support of my heart? If I might have my wish, what would I now see? The whole world fall down at my feet to worship me; or all these things vanish and disappear before the glory of the Lord Jesus, that we might go, and fall down and worship his Majesty? What am I content to suffer and endure for this, though I stay long before I enjoy it? Hath patience had its perfect work? and do I rejoice, though in tribulation, in hope of this glory? Is this my satisfaction also, in the greatest fulness of worldly goods, and are mine eyes, even then, ever towards the Lord? Am I still looking up unto Jesus, sighing for him, and saying, *Come, Lord Jesus, come quickly?* I can appeal to thee, that thou knowest there is nothing I so much long for as that thou wouldst come. O come, make haste to come, and satisfy the desires of thy church, which have long cried, *Come, Lord Jesus.*

Let us not deceive ourselves; this great apostle hath pronounced a curse upon every one that *loves not the Lord Jesus*[s]. And he that loves him loves his appearing: and he that loveth his appearing sets his thoughts, his heart, his design so much upon it, as to contrive by all means (whatsoever become of him here) that, when Jesus who is our life shall appear, he may appear with him in his glory. Riches, greatness, pleasures, fame, long life, and all the train that waits upon them, are but as so many big names; loud, but empty sounds, which signify nothing to him, in comparison with these exceeding great things, the *coming*, the *appearing*, the *kingdom* and the *glory* of Christ Jesus. The sweetest friend in this world, to whom he hath conceived the most passionate love, will not hinder him from seeking these: but rather by that love he will be excited to remember with what inexpressible affection he ought to pursue such divine enjoyments; not only for his own soul, but for his second self. The best wish he can make for both is, that they may be carried with the same eager desires and hasty speed, to perfect their love in the incomparably greater joys and blessedness of Christ's heavenly kingdom.

[s] 1 Cor. xvi. 22.

So great they are, that, having now finished all that was at first propounded to be considered on this subject, this love will not be content that I should here make an end. It being such a masterly affection, and governing the soul so absolutely, as hath been related, will not suffer us to lay that presently out of our thoughts which it hath once planted very deep in our hearts. It is one of its greatest pleasures, to think very much of that good, whose company it doth not yet enjoy: and, when it is far distant of itself, to make it present by a constant image of it in the mind.

And therefore it cannot be any wonder, if we bear a true love to the appearing of Christ, that it will not permit us to be willing to cease our meditations on so delightful an argument. It doth but act according to its nature, if it require us again to take another view of it; and spend a few more thoughts upon so bright and glorious an object. And happy were it for us, if it were nothing else but mere love that made me resume this discourse and begin it again; and that made those who read it to be willing or rather desirous to know further what are the causes of this heavenly affection to the appearing of our Lord.

For that is it wherein I intend to employ the remainder of my thoughts upon this subject. Love is a passion that is very desirous to feel itself; and to be satisfied of its own sincerity, by the strength, and force, and restlessness of its motion. It fills the heart also with such a secret joy, that it would fain know the very spring of all its delectable motions, and be led to the rise of every one of its desires and inclinations. Both the strangeness and the variety of its surprising pleasures are so great, that our hearts cannot but be invited thereby to the very bottom of it; to see from whence it flows, as we perceive whither it tends. And therefore, as I have touched upon the general cause and reason of this passion of love in the foregoing part of this small treatise; so it is not fit to deny it, in the following part, a brief consideration of the particular reasons why it should be set upon the appearing of Christ.

And they may be reduced to these two heads:

First, The great affection that all good souls have for our blessed Saviour himself: and,

Secondly, The natural affection we all bear to our own good and welfare.

Which when we have considered, we shall be ashamed that we do not with greater fervour say, with respect to this, in our daily prayers, *Thy kingdom come;* and be mightily excited to call upon our souls more frequently to meditate on *that blessed hope,* and *to look,* with much affection, *for the glorious appearing of the great God and our Saviour Jesus Christ.* Who will be so much honoured thereby himself, and then confer such upon us, as should make us long for the accomplishment of both.

CHAP. XI.

Reasons for our love to this appearing, drawn from the respect we ought to have to our Lord himself.

As for the first of these, the affection that is due to our blessed Saviour, it ought to be strong, you will easily confess, that death itself should not be an equal match for it. That which conquers all things should itself be conquered by this; and the king of terrors should yield all his force, and yield himself a captive to the love of the King of love.

For since there is so great a power in hearty and unfeigned love, to beget love in those to whom it is expressed; and since the love whereby our Lord attracts our affection doth so vastly exceed all other; it is a prodigious obstinacy or negligence, that the dullest and heaviest souls are not drawn by so big a loadstone.

Do we not feel, as I have said elsewhere, some motions of kindness in our hearts for the most contemptible creatures; when they constantly fawn upon us, and follow us, and lie down by us, and will by no means leave us, but take our part if any body assault us? Are we not much pleased with this affection they have to us, and concerned for their safety, and ready to reward them with tokens of our love to them? We must be infidels then, or very inconsiderate and regardless of our blessed Saviour; or else find our hearts put into the greatest passion, when we read and seriously weigh the strange expressions which our Saviour hath made of the most endearing love to us.

When we remember how he neglected himself to serve us;

how he endured hunger and thirst that we might be satisfied; how he gave the people the very bread out of his mouth, and forgot to feed himself, that he might nourish them; when we see how he addresses himself unto us; how he woos and courts us (to speak in our own language) with the greatest kindness to come to him; how solicitous he is for our happiness; how he sighed for us; how he groaned in spirit to see men so obstinate; how he sweat; how he bled; how he gave his very life for us; and was content to be exposed to the greatest shame rather than we should perish; what heart can be so insensible as not to be mightily affected with it, and to think of returning back his love, and that in some proportion to the wonderful greatness of it?

But then, alas! it must be confessed that we find, when our passion is stirred up, and our hearts begin to burn within us, we have little or nothing there that is worthy of him. A present we would fain make to him, but have none fit to be offered to so great a Majesty. Nay, so void many times and empty are our hearts of all that is good, that we may well be ashamed to let him see them. Our thoughts are so dull, and the resentments we have of his kindness so feeble and weak, that we ourselves in whom they are can scarce feel them. And at the best our affections are so small and so short, that we cannot but blush to come furnished with no better oblation to him.

What shall we do in this case? How shall we behave ourselves with some due regard to his incomprehensible love? Love him we must; but love him as he is worthy, and as we would, we are not able. We cannot choose but bring him our hearts, and yet we are sensible they are not worth the bringing.

We shall find ourselves naturally inclined, in these circumstances, to do just as a grateful poor man doth; who, being unable himself to requite a friend's courtesies, rejoices to hear that so very great a person will take that care upon him. Or as the divine Psalmist doth, who, finding his own thoughts too short and low, calls upon the angels, who excel in strength, to set forth the praises of Him, whose name is highly exalted above all blessing and praise. That is, since we ourselves cannot requite the benefits our Lord hath done us, nor worthily magnify his goodness towards us; we ought in all reason to be

exceeding desirous that God *the Father of glory* (as St. Paul calls him) would be pleased to reward his love, and make his praise glorious. Since there is nothing here whereby we can considerably honour him, we must needs wish the day would come, when *the blessed and only Potentate* will show the respect he bears unto him.

As it is a joy to think that he is gone to the Father, and there is recompensed for his sufferings; so it is a matter of greater gladness, if we have any love for him, to remember that at his appearing (which he, who is able, will in due time show) he shall still be more magnified. This therefore all serious Chistians cannot but much desire to see. For this they cannot but long extremely, and call with earnest expectation for the coming of that joyful day: that, since they cannot laud and praise him enough now, the whole world may then be gathered together, in one general assembly, all angels, and all men, and with joint consent bow themselves before him, and humbly acknowledge him to be the *Lord of all.*

And here I shall take the liberty, for the clearer understanding of this, to give a distinct account, in a few considerations, of that which, we may justly conceive, will accrue to our blessed Saviour by his glorious appearing.

I.

And first of all, there is no doubt but, at his second appearing, our Lord will be publicly honoured, and thereby have an amends made him for the open shame and the public disgrace to which he was here exposed. No varlet was ever used so basely as the world treated him, when he first "came to visit us in much humility." No man was ever the subject of so much scorn, of so many sorrows, and of so great pains, as he endured. Would it not then be acceptable to you to see his honour every where vindicated, his credit, as I may say, repaired, and his glory made no less notorious than his reproaches were?

Who would not wish to see that sweet face (which by rude hands was so contemptuously blinded and buffeted) appear in an unveiled brightness, looking with the fairest, the most beautiful and gracious eyes upon us? How is it possible to refrain from desiring to see that countenance which was spit upon,

and all bespawled by the filthy mouths of wicked men, shining with rays brighter than the sun, and glistering in the glory and majesty of God the Father? Are you not impatient to behold that head which was environed with thorns show itself with a royal crown upon it? Would you not fain see him as much admired as he was despised, as highly praised and extolled as he was vilely mocked and flouted?

O that I might behold that time arrive! (is every devout lover of the Lord Jesus apt to say;) O that I might be blessed with a sight of that glory and honour wherewith, we believe, thou art already crowned! Thou wast sorely wounded and grossly abused, O dear Saviour, by those whom thou camest to heal and to save. They barbarously smote and besmeared thy holy face; they nailed thee to a cross; they pierced thy hands and thy feet; they thrust a spear into thy side, and left thee all in gore; they condemned thee as the foulest malefactor, and crucified thy name and reputation as well as thyself. And, which is worse, how have thine own followers grieved thee, and pricked thy very heart, by their base ingratitude to thee, who wast pleased to be thus vilely used for their sake!

And what reparation are the best among us able to make thee? what does it amount unto that such poor wretches as we can do for thee? How mean and inconsiderable is all the honour and all the praise that we, little and worthless things, can pretend to give thee!

O thou God of love, thou Father of mercies, we must address our desires to thee, and beseech thee that thou wouldst be pleased to do it for us. Thou, who art the *blessed and only Potentate;* who hast already appointed him to be *heir of all things;* who hast *given him a more excellent inheritance than the angels,* and when thou broughtest him into the world, didst command them all to worship him; finish, I beseech thee, according to the riches of thy glory, the recompenses thou hast begun to make him. Let me and all men else see how thou lovest him, and what honour thou hast conferred on him.

Behold how this soul sighs out its desires to thee, that thou wouldst vouchsafe to hasten his appearing, and to show him to the world in the glory which thou hast given him. Let us all behold him as highly exalted as he was lowly depressed and

abased. Let us *see him as he is*, the Prince of life, the King of glory. O perfect that which concerneth him. Let him come and receive our universal acknowledgments. *Let all kings fall down before him, and all nations serve him. Let them all call him blessed, and heaven and earth be filled with his glory. Amen, and Amen*[s].

II.

They may well pray after this manner, and speak of his perfecting that which is begun, because (secondly) till the day of his glorious appearing, it is most certain, his conquests will not be completed over all his enemies. The very greatest of them will remain unsubdued, till he come then to tread them under his feet. Which cannot but dispose us to love that time above all other, because it will make him perfectly victorious.

He is *sat down*, saith the apostle, at God's right hand, *from thenceforth expecting till his enemies be made his footstool*[t]. Though he be highly advanced, that is, above all creatures, yet all his enemies do not presently fall down before him; but he must stay some time before not only all the adverse empires on earth submit themselves to him, but the principalities also in the air, and death itself, which is the *last enemy*, saith St. Paul, *which shall be destroyed, and put under his feet*[u]. He rules and reigns indeed; but still he hath many opposers of his kingdom. He waits likewise for their utter subversion, and looks for their total ruin; but still they spoil and commit many wastes within his territories. The devil tyrannises and rages in a number of places; and death (as I must show anon) devours all.

How can we choose then but wait for that of which he himself is in expectation? Where is our love to him, if we can cease to wish that all those foes who despise or refuse his government were perfectly brought in subjection to him? Is there any thing more desirable to those who pray seriously his kingdom may come, than to see those put under his feet who now proudly trample upon his sovereign authority? What more joyful sight can there be to them, than to behold the devil, who now insults so insolently in his dominions, despoiled of all his power, and thrust down into the eternal prisons and chains of

[s] [Ps. lxxii. 11, 19.] [t] Heb. x. 12, 13. [u] [1 Cor. xv. 26.]

darkness, to which he is reserved? To say nothing yet of the glory it will be to him to overcome death itself, to which even all his subjects are forced at present to submit.

O blessed Saviour (should all Christian souls say with one consent), it afflicts us to hear *thine enemies roar in the midst of thy congregation;* to see them thus triumph and *set up their banners*[v]. And far more grievous it is to think that we have ever been in the number of them, and given the least countenance and support to this hellish kingdom. The remembrance of it is bitter to us, that there was a time (wretches that we were) when we were drawn aside to join ourselves to this wicked faction, and abet the apostate spirits in their rebellion against thee, their sovereign Creator.

But, blessed be thy goodness, thou hast overcome our disobedient hearts, and restored us to an happy accord with thee. We thank thee for it with all our souls, and wish we might likewise see all nations fall down before thee and worship thee. What a joy would it be to see all the kingdoms of the earth become the kingdoms of thee, O Christ! What greater pleasure can our hearts desire, which are not able to express the satisfaction it would give them to behold the kingdom of darkness, which is shaken already, falling flat upon the ground?

Overturn it, overturn it, O thou most Mighty, utterly overturn it. O come, and do that which we endeavour, but cannot do. Come, and let us see thee vindicate thyself from the affronts of all thine insolent enemies. Let us see all the legions of evil spirits haled as captives at the wheels of thy triumphant chariot. Let us see all the powers of the air flying away at thy presence, to hide themselves in the pit of hell for ever.

O thou who hast subdued us unto thee, subdue them likewise, and bring them under thee. Thou who didst wrest us out of their hands, wrest from them all their power, and leave them none to get any more into their hands. As thou hast conquered, so we would gladly see thee triumph; as thou hast overcome, so we would fain see thee carried in magnificent and royal state, as the most victorious *Lord of hosts.*

Haste thee, therefore, O sweet Saviour, to receive our ovations. Come, that all the world may give thee the acclamations

[v] [Ps. lxxiv. 4.]

which thou deservest. *Why is thy chariot so long in coming? why stay the wheels of thy chariot?* O that it would please thee to come, while our souls are peeping out of their windows to look for thee; while they call and cry and sigh after thee; while they are full charged with shouts and praises to bestow upon thee.

III.

There is very great reason, you cannot but see, that they should be thus desirous of his appearing, because, it is manifest by what hath been now said, it will bring along with it some addition of glory to our dearest Lord.

If we had a friend who was elected to be a king, should we not often call for the day that would place him on his throne? or if he were seated there, but had some rebellious subjects still in arms in a corner of his country, should we not be in some pain till we saw his conquering banners return with their spoils? or if that were done, and a time then prefixed for a solemn meeting of all the estates of his realm, in the midst of which he intended to sit himself with the greatest pomp; should we not think it long till we saw him shine there, and receive the homage of so many illustrious persons?

Tell yourselves then with what ardours you should wait for the coming of your Lord: who, though he be now crowned, yet doth not for the present see all his enemies subdued; nor appears as yet in the grand assembly, not only of the angels and mighty men, but of all people whatsoever who shall be gathered before his Majesty.

It is true, indeed, he being enthroned in the heavens sits there in royal honour and glory. But St. Luke tells us (as you heard before[v]) that he will appear in the end of the world, not only in his *own glory*, but in the *glory of his Father* also; as if that were something more than what he hath already received at his right hand: that is, he will come from thence "to judge the quick and the dead:" which will be an exceeding great glory, such an high honour as was never conferred upon any person whatsoever, to *have all judgment committed unto him*, and sustain the very place of the supreme Lord and Governor of the world, to whom men and angels are accountable for their actions. This is a thing that is still behind; and

[v] Luke ix. 26.

there are, it seems, some royal majestic robes belonging to this high office which he hath not yet put on.

O how much should we desire to have him clothed with them! how earnestly should we look to behold him decked with that majesty, and arrayed in his most glorious attire! It should not be enough to us to believe that he reigns, but we should long to see the last exercise and the greatest proof of his kingly authority; which is *to judge the world in righteousness,* and *to reward all men according to their works.*

O God, (should every true Christian say,) who, according to thy faithful word, hast glorified thy Son Jesus, and committed all judgment to him; hasten the day when thou wilt complete the glory thou hast given him, and gather all nations before him. Clothe him in the glorious robes of thy majesty, and let him appear in his meridian brightness. Send him forth of thy sanctuary, and let him outshine the sun in his strength.

O that he would shine forth, and shoot his rays as far as this earth. Let them not be confined to these highest heavens; but let the air and these inferior regions be all gilded with the splendour of his beams.

O blessed Jesus, that we might behold thy light breaking out, to banish all this smoke, and disperse these vapours wherein we are enclosed! Let the troops of thy holy angels come and expel those evil spirits which have possessed themselves of these aerial places. Let thy glorious throne be set there, where they have so long ruled.

Arise and show thyself, O thou Judge of the world. Let them all know that they are subject to thy tribunal. And sentence them to their proper habitations; that after thy appearing they may disappear, and never break loose to infest or trouble us any more.

Then will thy faithful servants shout aloud for joy, and triumph in thy praise. They will sing a new song before thy throne, and magnify thee in some such words as these:

Who in the heavens can be compared unto the Lord? Who among the sons of the mighty can be likened unto the Lord[x]*? Great and marvellous are thy works, Lord God Almighty; just and true are thy ways, thou King of saints. Who shall*

[x] Psalm lxxxix. 6.

not fear thee, O Lord, and glorify thy name? For thou only art holy: all nations are come to worship before thee; for thy judgments are made manifest[y].

IV.

And upon this account we should be the more desirous to see that great day; because till then he will want the glory of having us and all his faithful subjects attend upon him in his heavenly kingdom. It is a very small glory indeed, you may be apt to think, that he can receive from such poor things as we are: who must acknowledge that we are unworthy, utterly unworthy of the favour to approach unto him; and if we should be so vain as to think otherwise, deserve to be banished for ever from his blessed presence. But when we remember how great his love is, and what he hath promised to do for us, we must likewise confess, to the glory of his grace, that he can and will raise us so much above ourselves, that it shall be an honour to him to have such subjects, who by his Almighty power are so nobly preferred. The magnificence and greatness of his kingdom will appear in the greatness and splendour of all his friends and followers. It shall be seen in them what he is, and how highly God the Father hath exalted him; whom *he gave him to be the head over all things to the church; which is his body, the fulness of him that filleth all in all*[z].

Certain it is he cannot be perfect (as he is the *head* of the church) without all his members. In which regard several both of the Greek and Latin fathers[a] think that his *body*, the church, is called his *fulness;* because he will not be absolutely completed and consummated till all his members be knit together in one body, and joined to him in such a glory as is befitting those that are so nearly related to him: who is able to communicate to them out of his fulness what excellencies he pleases. "This," says St. Chrysostom, "is the hope of our calling, (which the apostle speaks of before,) the riches of the glory of the inheritance, the exceeding greatness of his power to us-ward who believe."

For whom he hath such an affection, and loves us with so

[y] Rev. xv. 3, 4. [z] Ephes. i. 22, 23. [a] V. S. Chrys. [in loc. tom. xi. p. 19 F.] Œcumenium, [p. 12 D.] S. Hieron. [tom. xi. col. 998 F.]

great tenderness, that he doth not think himself entirely happy unless we be promoted to be with him where he is, and to reign with him for ever. So much is his heart set upon our advancement, that he accounts himself to be but in part glorious, till we be numbered among his saints in glory everlasting.

Then will he shine in greater splendour and majesty than ever; according to those words of St. Paul in another place, where he saith, *He shall come to be glorified in his saints, and to be admired in all them that believe*[b]. For first of all, (as Œcumenius[c] hath collected the sense of the ancient fathers about this business,) it will be a glory to him that he hath so many saints, to whom he will distribute his goods, and make illustrious with him. For as his riches, saith he, is our salvation, so it will be a glory to him. And, secondly, he will be glorified also by his saints, when they shall behold him sitting ἐν τῇ πατρῴᾳ δόξῃ, &c. 'in his Father's glory, the God and the Judge of all.' And, thirdly, we may add that the saints will procure him glory from the spiritual powers, when they shall see what a recompense of reward he hath vouchsafed to his servants: who, as they shall give occasion to his being glorified, so to his being admired also; because it will be a most wonderful and amazing sight to see those, who were thought so vile and abject in this present life that they were persecuted and murdered, accounted worthy then of such and so great good things as he will bestow upon them.

And truly, as our Lord will be thus magnified and admired at that day, so this ought now to be very wonderful in our eyes: who have little consideration, if we be not exceedingly in love with his appearing, when self-love so strongly inclines and prompts our affection to it. Can we find in our hearts to turn away our eyes from that, or cease to long for it with ardent desire, which nature itself calls for as the greatest good? Here our own interest combines with his to make us wish for that blessed day, which shall make him more illustrious by the brightness of our glory. Here two great seas meet and run into one; to make our souls swell and rise up in bigger expectations of his happiness.

Come, should your heart and mine say, come, O blessed

[b] 2 Thess. i. 10. [c] [In loc. tom. ii. p. 191 A.]

Jesus, and at once make us and thyself entirely glorious. Arise, O thou Sun of righteousness, and shed thy beams so plentifully upon us, that we may shine with thee as the sun in the kingdom of the Father.

Great are the things which are spoken of thy coming, when *the exceeding greatness of thy power* shall appear *to us-ward who believe*[c]. O come, and complete thine own fulness, by filling us, out of thine exuberant goodness, with all the blessings of thine heavenly inheritance. Do not want that happiness any longer, which will make us happy too, together with thee. Delay not to put on those kingly robes, wherein when thou appearest, we shall be promoted to reign as kings with thee for ever.

How will our ravished spirits then rejoice in that great salvation! How will they triumph to see every knee bow to thine exalted name! nay, to see thee admired in us, when thou shalt *exalt the honour of thy people, the praise of all thy saints*[d]*!*

O come, that the greatness of thy glory and majesty may appear in thy saints, and thy wonderful power and love in all those that believe.

And till thou comest, *let all thy saints be joyful in glory. Let them sing aloud in perfect quiet and repose*[e]. Yea, *let the high praises of our God be in their mouth;* who hath given us hope of victory over all our enemies. Let them never cease to praise him, who takes pleasure in his people, and will beautify them with his salvation.

Praise him, who hath promised to come and visit us in greater love than ever. Praise him who is the *head over all things to the church:* and will *present it to himself a glorious church, not having spot or wrinkle or any such thing*[f]. Let his name be alway engraven upon our hearts; who hath comforted us with the blessed hope of seeing him in all his glory. Let the memory of his transcendent love be ever most dear unto us; who intends to lift us up to sit with him in heavenly places. Let us never forget to rejoice in his holy name; with whom we expect to rejoice in the highest happiness of endless life.

[c] [Eph. i. 19.] [d] Psalm cxlviii. 14. [e] cxlix. 5, 6.
[f] Eph. v. 27.

And, O blessed Jesus, that we may be so happy now as to long for that day, on thy account as well as our own. May it delight us to think how thou wilt be admired and highly praised in our exaltation. Make us so much in love with thee, as to desire to see ourselves raised unto honour; because it will make thee also appear in greater glory.

CHAP. XII.

Other reasons why we should love his appearing, drawn from the love we have to ourselves.

THUS I have made a fair way to introduce the second thing which I propounded, for the completing of this discourse. Wherein I am to show how the natural affection we all bear to ourselves should powerfully dispose us to love the appearing of our Lord Jesus. And this will admit of no less than these ten considerations; which will instantly, at the very first hearing, win our assent to the truth of them. For,

I.

First, we cannot but passionately desire, if we have any belief of this appearing, to see so great an honour as will then be done to our nature: so great, that no soul who is possessed with a lively sense of it can be tempted any longer to envy the greatness of the noblest persons; no, not the high dignity of the blessed angels. The brightest of the cherubims should not be so grievous to us as to hurt our eyes; nor the flames of the seraphims touch us with the least spark of indignation, to see ourselves so much excelled by them: but we should rather wish they were more glorious and illustrious, because the greater they are, the greater will the advancement of our nature be, which, at the appearing of Christ, will shine in a place so far above the highest of them.

Those heavenly creatures indeed are so splendid, that we poor mortals, even the holiest of us, were wont to be afraid at their appearance. They are too glittering for our weak eyes to behold: too full of lustre for us, who dwell in these caves of darkness, to converse withal. Whence it was that some pious

people in ancient times presently concluded they should die if they saw an angel: imagining that his business, when he appeared, was to fetch their souls from their bodies; in which while they lived, they were not fit for such society. And other excellent persons were so amazed at the glory of these celestial ministers, that they thought of paying them no less than religious honour; and prepared themselves to fall down before them and worship them as gods.

O what an happiness then will it be to see our natures so improved and exalted, that we shall be able to entertain their company without any trembling at all; and, instead of those paralytic fears, be only struck with a delightful sense of the most harmonious joys! What a glory will it be unto us, what a joy to find ourselves made equal to those whom we took for gods! to behold ourselves as bright as those celestial fires, which were wont to dazzle the eyes of the greatest souls, and possess them with an apprehension that they were divine beings!

But especially we ought to consider, what an honour, what a satisfaction it will be, to behold, not so few as one, or two, or a thousand of those beautiful creatures, but the whole heavenly court, (whom we were ready to adore,) come all with bended knees, and humbly prostrate themselves in the most profound adorations at the feet of our ever blessed Saviour, Christ Jesus. Into what a rapture will it cast us to behold our nature so advanced, that all the gods shall approach and worship this same Jesus, who was so debased and abused! A most glorious and delightful sight it will be, to behold him in the head of all those heavenly hosts; to see all the air filled with the several legions of holy angels; to behold every troop in that glorious camp paying their respect to our far more glorious Lord; and with their shouts and joyful acclamations following him, as their General and chief Commander; and all the powers of darkness likewise crouching at his feet, quaking at his majestic presence, disarmed of all their weapons, and confessing themselves the captives and slaves of this victorious Prince, Christ Jesus.

O my ambitious desires, where are you? What is become of you, O my aspiring thoughts? You that used to be ever

climbing aloft, and perpetually heaving up my heart, whither are you gone, or into what dulness are you now sunk down? What is the matter that you lie asleep, when so fair an object presents itself to awaken and rouse you up? What ails you, that I do not feel you stir, who were wont, with less temptations, to be all on fire?

Is there any thing we can reasonably thirst after with so much ardour, as to have all the world behold us made the companions of angelical natures? What is there that you can fancy a higher glory than to see this flesh of ours taking place of the heavenly spirits? to behold all the armies of heaven and earth waiting upon the supreme Judge of the world, the man Christ Jesus?

Get up then, get up, and pray perpetually that this most blessed time may come. Rouse up yourselves, and in your most passionate wishes fly beforehand thitherward. Let this be the but at which you shoot, the mark at which you always aim, O my winged thoughts and hasty desires. Let this be the end of all your labours, O my busy and restless powers; and content yourselves in any condition till this most happy state shall come. Live upon this joyful hope. Cheer up yourselves with these most comfortable expectations. They cannot be utterly miserable, no, they must needs be very happy, whatsoever their troubles be, who look for such an incomparable glory.

Rejoice therefore, and more than that, make your boast in this perpetually, that one day angels themselves, who are out of the reach of our present calamities, shall not excel you; but if there be any difference, it shall be only such as was between the men of Judah and the men of Israel, (at the bringing back of king David to his throne,) that you shall be able to call this great Son of David *bone of your bone, and flesh of your flesh*, when the highest angels can challenge no such interest in him.

O most blessed hope! the staff of our life; the stay and the strength of our hearts! The security of the happy, and the sanctuary of the afflicted! that which preserves our joys from becoming sour, and which sweetens the bitterness of all our miseries! Our rest, our peace, our highest satisfaction!

It is enough that I am owner of such a glorious hope. Be thou ever in mine eye; be thou ever in my heart. I will walk

and labour all the days of my life in this holy hope. And I will lie down at last in hope that thou, who now sendest down thy angels to minister unto us, wilt call us up unto thyself, and make us to sit with thee in those heavenly regions.

O come, come, Lord Jesus, that we may be all so happy. And till thou comest, descend sometimes into this heart, which loves thee and longs for thee: and lift it up unto thee in more ardent desires, earnest endeavours, and holy hopes to see thy glory, and to appear in glory together with thee.

II.

It will be very strange if we believe in Christ and be not possessed with these desires, when we attend to the secret inclinations there are in every one of our hearts, to wish we might be blessed with a sight of him who is so lovely, and who hath loved us so much; whom hitherto our eyes have never seen.

For did any body ever hear of a most excellently-accomplished person, full of the most obliging kindness to him, and that had infinitely merited of him, and designed all the honour in the world for him, and not feel a most passionate longing desire burning in him to behold the face of this great man, who had an heart so tender, so noble, and so graciously affected towards him?

This is our case, who live in these remote places and ages of the world, and have heard indeed with the hearing of the ear, of Christ Jesus our dearest Saviour, and of his incomparable love, and of the honour he hath done us, and still intends to do us; but have not yet been so happy as to have our eyes entertained, much less satisfied, with the blissful sight of him, as theirs were who lived near him, and conversed with him at his first appearing. If we had any hope therefore of his appearing again, though in less splendour than I have told you, we could not but look up unto heaven, where he lives, with earnest expectations, and say, When will he come, when will he come and manifest himself visibly unto us? because, as yet, we know nothing of him but by the report of those who had the honour to be *eyewitnesses to his majesty.*

We have been told by them that they saw this amiable and gracious Person, and clearly discerned that he was *God manifested in the flesh.* They have assured us that he was born of

a spotless virgin; that his name was Jesus; that he was acknowledged the Son of God by voices from heaven, and by the descent of the Holy Ghost in a visible manner upon his head; and yet that he was contented to become poor and mean that he might enrich us; to suffer his hands, and his feet, and his heart to be pierced, that he might heal our wounds; yea, we have heard that he descended into the lowermost parts of the earth for our salvation; and that he rose from the dead again after three days; and that he ascended up on high, and now sits at the right hand of the Father; and will come again to judge the world, and to take up his faithful servants unto himself.

And most comfortable news all this is which hath arrived at our ears; and we must needs, with all thankfulness, dutifully acknowledge that we are marvellously beholden to the almighty goodness, which hath taken such care to persuade and fully assure us of its truth. But still every pious heart that sincerely and ardently loves him is apt to say:

When will he come again, that then we may see, as now we believe, the certain truth of all this, which we have heard of him with our ears? When shall we be satisfied by such evidence as the apostles and other of his attendants had, who beheld his person and saw his glory, *as the only begotten of the Father, full of grace and truth?* May not we also hope to be as they were, *eyewitnesses of his majesty?*

O when will his holy angels descend unto us, and say, as they did to them, *Come, and see that he is risen?* When shall we hear a voice from heaven, saying, *Come up hither*, and *behold my beloved Son, in whom I am ever well pleased?* When will the trump of the archangel sound, and proclaim in all our ears, that he is *Judge of quick and dead?* O how many days must we stay and wait before we rise again to ascend up to him where he is? How long will it be before we leave this earth to behold him exalted at the right hand of the Majesty on high?

O most gracious Saviour, who hast done such great things for us, come, and let us see that thou art alive, and still lovest us. Come, and put us out of all doubt that thou livest for evermore. Let us behold those bright, those loving eyes, which wept so oft and with so much kindness over us. Let us see

that sweet and now most glorious face, which sweat as it had been drops of blood for thy sake. Stretch forth those hands that were wounded in our service: O stretch them out to lay hold on us, and lift us up to the vision of thee. Do not long defer before thou lettest us enjoy what we now believe. Make no long tarrying, O blessed Lord, but turn the faith of thy servants into sight. And by thy second appearing, be pleased to make us as sure as thou didst those who then lived by thy first.

We are persuaded that the fame of those things which we wait for is nothing comparable to the sight of them. We cannot but think that all present reports fall far short, infinitely short of future enjoyment. Thy type, the great Solomon, O Lord, puts us in mind of thee, and makes us more desirous to see thee. We would fain go, like the queen of Sheba, from these furthermost parts of the earth, that we may stand before thee in thy heavenly Jerusalem. Not the half, we believe, of thy magnificence hath been related to us. No, not the shadow of thy glory and majesty hath been brought to these far distant climates, where we hear little or nothing of thee.

Nay, we believe we cannot now understand thy greatness, if it should be all related to us. If we should see thee as thou art, in thy royal apparel, on the throne of thy glory, with all thy heavenly attendants and noble ministers round about thee, *there would be no more spirit left within us.* We should faint away under the weight of that sight, unless thou, O Lord, wouldst disburden us of this flesh, and make us become all spirit.

And that is the happiness indeed which we desire, and groan in spirit till we enjoy. There is no greater good we can wish than to be caught up from this earth, and have eyes bestowed upon us, bright and strong enough to behold thy majesty. We cannot but long for this, that we may stand in thy presence, and be satisfied with thee; that we may see thee, who hast loved us and given thyself for us; thee whose love hath won our hearts, and conducted us thus far in our way towards thee; thee who art our hope, and with whom our life is hid; that we may see thee, O Lord, in the height of thy glory, and thy face may shine upon us, and our eyes sparkle for joy with the light of thy countenance; of which we are the

more desirous, because we never yet had the favour to see thee, who art so dear unto us.

O favour us therefore so much, most gracious Lord, as to come and gratify our desires with that unknown, that long looked for sight of thee.

III.

And there is still a greater reason to desire it, and to be in love with his appearing; because then we hope to be perfected and consummated in love.

This is an affection, you have heard, so pleasurable, that we are enticed thereby, or rather sweetly forced to strain our souls to the utmost expression of it. When we have found an object worthy of this passion, the delight it gives us invites, nay compels, our hearts to the most abundant effusion of it; that so we may not want the highest degree of delight and joy.

But alas! love in this world, though exceeding sweet, is not, as we usually speak, all honey; but there is some bitterness mingled together with it. The heart that is struck with it receives a wound which cannot be perfectly healed till it enjoys its desires, and that you know is not without the company of anguish and pain.

1. For we find that when men admit into their hearts the love of any mortal creature like themselves, the soul, which before was whole, unbroken and entire, is as it were separated and torn by this passion, both from itself and all other objects; save only that which hath engaged its affection. Now all men know that no heart can be thus parted and divided without a sense of grief and smart, attending on such a divulsion and rending of it from itself: till it feel that soul, which it loves as another self, effectually joined to it.

And then (2) we find that after it hath obtained well assured hopes of this, yet those eager desires and longings that are in this passion still carry their sting in them; and make the heart but ill at ease until they be accomplished. Both which it were easy to apply to that devout affection wherewith pious souls are touched towards our blessed Saviour; which is very unquiet and full of trouble till they know and feel that he loves them.

3. But I shall rather observe, (which is peculiar to this holy

love,) that the wounds, as I may call them, which are made in any heart by the wonderful kindness of our Saviour, who loved us so much as to die for us, are wont very oft to be a torment to it; because it can love him no more, and doth not feel such vehement transports of affection to him, as it desires, and he hath merited.

And then (4) though we are fully persuaded that we do sincerely and heartily love him, yet this proves a great trouble to us, here in this present state, that we fancy him sometimes to be a stranger to us; and he seems to treat us as if he were suspicious of our love.

And (5) when we have the greatest sense of his most tender mercies, and he sheds abroad his love in our hearts; this creates a new grief, because he stays no longer with us, and we cannot call him back, as oft as we please, to give us those delicious tastes of his infinite love.

But (6) there is nothing so considerable in this matter as that we cannot enjoy those gracious visits from our Lord (of which we are so desirous, and which fill the heart with the greatest love to him and delight in him) but they conclude in sighs and groans, and leave us much unsatisfied, while we are in this mortal body. That very love which God himself excites, those heavenly impressions which his own hand makes upon our hearts, the greatest ardours of divine affection wherewith we are inspired from above; are not without their pangs of trouble in all those who, with earnest intention of mind and most hearty desires, give up themselves to follow them, and seriously endeavour to comply with them.

For while a devout soul (that is in a lively manner touched by him) stretches its wings, as I may say, and spreads itself with great affection that it may mount up in vehement love unto him; it presently feels how unable it is to answer those divine motions, and sees, to its sorrow, that its wings are not grown large enough to bear it so high as it then aspires. There is a powerful spirit indeed, which stimulates it to fly aloft where he is; but while it endeavours to obey its inspirations, it is strongly dragged and pulled down by the earthly tabernacle to these inferior enjoyments. It is borne away with violent and swift desires; and at the same time sinks below, and sadly flags for want of power.

Like the bird that is not yet fully fledged, which would fain fly when it hears the mother call, but finding its wings too weak, is forced to fall into some hedge or tree, and there is content to hop up and down, and please itself in its little chirpings among the branches; so doth the devout soul feel itself when it is very desirous to correspond with the heavenly motions that are stirring in it, and when it thinks it hears the Father of spirits saying, Come up hither. It fails in the attempt; and can only make some small but feeble essays towards its celestial country. It is soon tired and grows weary; and while it pants and breathes after high and excellent things, cannot reach them or come nigh them; but faints away and spends itself in sighs, which are so much the sadder, because it sees the spacious heavens before its eyes, and yet must be content to drop down and sit still upon the earth.

Yea, the very stretching of her wings puts the soul to pain, when she cannot fly. The straining of herself is very uneasy; when she can only groan, but not raise up herself to the pitch that she desires. She suffers a kind of torment between these two; the strength of her affections, and the weakness of her ability; the sharpness of her sight, and the dulness of her enjoyment.

O miserable creature that I am, what shall I do? (is the dejected soul in this case apt to say.) Pardon me, dear Lord, if my great love to thee make me call myself miserable; when I know that I am very happy. It is my desire to be nearer to thee, which makes me deplore not only my distance from thee, but the feebleness of my soul in its endeavours to approach thee.

O what a change have a few moments made in me! I thought just now I was going up to heaven; and alas! here I lie at this present sighing upon the ground. The divine breath, methought, was carrying me above; and I, unable to accompany it, am still here below. I felt as if I was all life and spirit a little while ago; and now I am almost dead. I seemed as if I should have quite forgot this world; and now I can scarce think of any thing else.

O how sweet it would be, but to remember the tastes that I had of thy transcendent love! whereas now, alas! I can scarce

relish any thing that is good. What shall I do with myself? or what shall I desire for this poor soul, which is thus sadly burdened and pressed down by the corruptible body?

My heart is with Jesus; but, O how little do I enjoy of him! I am not myself, I am become another thing than I was before; and yet how little is there of Jesus in me! How wide is the distance still between me and my dearest Lord! How do I long to be exactly like him; but how short, O how vastly short am I of him! And how like a stranger doth he sometime seem! How do I lose, in this blind and dark estate, the sight and sense of his most precious love! I know my heart loves him; but what a grief is it that my love is so weak, so dull, so little worthy of him!

O blessed Jesus, what a favour is it that thou wilt be pleased to cast, at any time, a gracious look upon such a cold and senseless heart as this of mine! With what thanks ought I to receive the smallest testimony of thine inestimable love! which is so sweet, that it makes us sigh because we can enjoy no more of it. Ah! that this vessel should be so narrow and strait, as to contain so little of thy love! Ah the dulness of this heart, which entertains thee so poorly, that it is no wonder thou makest so short a stay, so exceeding short a stay with me! How sad is it to think of this heavy clog, which will never let me follow thee far, when I have the strongest attractions from thee!

Fain would my soul climb up unto thee; but when I have got a little way, down I come, and have lost that glorious sight I had of thee. And if thou art pleased to lift me up as high as heaven, how soon is the mind weighed down again, while it museth upon those celestial things! O the constant joys which I hoped to have! how are they vanished! O the satisfaction which began to be in this heart, which now lies grovelling in the dust, filled with nothing but sighings after thee!

And blessed be thy goodness that it doth sigh after thee. I thank thee that I feel such love, such vehement desire there, as makes it long for more of thee. I will never cease to sigh after thee. I will still long for that time when thou, Lord, wilt be pleased to appear, and make all sighing fly away by a constant sight and enjoyment of thee. For this I will groan, that I may be so happy as to see thee; and that thou wilt make

me as strong, as sometime thou makest me desirous, to accompany thee. I will pray for this, that thou wouldst come and heal those wounds which love hath made, by making me perfect in thy love.

O come therefore, dearest Lord, and turn my desires into enjoyment, my sickness into health, my weakness into strength, these flutterings of my soul into a flight: into a flight, I say, from this earth into the air; where I may no sooner wish to be with thee, but I may feel my soul snatched away, and leap for joy to find itself in thy embraces.

Come, O my Lord, come, thou lover of souls, and let me not languish in these longings any more. Come, and leave no place for any fears that I shall lose thy company. Come, and give me the full satisfaction I promise myself in thy sweetest society. I am content to suffer one pain, that I may thereby put an end to all. Death is no longer dreadful to me, when I think it will bring me something nearer to thee. Thou mayest rend my soul when thou pleasest from this flesh; that it may be torn no more, as it uses to be, when it is pulled back by other things, and would gladly follow thee.

O join me perfectly, most perfectly to thee; that I may love thee as much as the most enlarged spirit is capable to love thee. Happy should I be, if I could do nothing else but love thee, and feel that thou lovest me. O hasten the day when my time shall be divided between these two sweetest employments; of expressing my most ardent love to thee, and rejoicing in the full satisfaction of thy love to me.

CHAP. XIII.

Two other reasons why, if we love ourselves, we must needs love this appearing.

IV.

So we ought to wish, if we seriously believe there will be such a day, because we naturally love *life and immortality*, which till then cannot be perfectly bestowed on us. Our Lord indeed hath brought these to light, and given us an assured hope that none of those who believe in him shall perish: but, as the everlasting life he puts us in possession of when we

depart from hence (I shall show in the next chapter) is not presently completed; so it is out of all question that we must stay till the *last day*[a] before he perform his so frequently repeated promise of raising our bodies out of the dust, and making them incorruptible, that they may live for ever.

Which is a thing we so much desire, that we are prone to please ourselves with the mere shadow of it, studying, when we die, to make our memory survive our ashes. We would fain record our names in the legend of fame by the performance of some remarkable exploit: or, by some memorable work, we contrive that the world may speak of us when we are gone down into silence; and, for fear it should not, we teach marble stones and pillars to tell what we were; and by this means we fancy we shall live as long as the world shall last.

But alas! this is no better than an imaginary life, which we cannot secure neither, but must leave the world without any assurance of that for which we are so solicitous, and employ such serious pains. No man's name can be so loudly sounded by the trumpet of fame, but it may chance that succeeding ages shall not hear the least whisper of him; or if they do, it may fare with him as it doth with Hercules and Bacchus, who were as great soldiers and conquerors, it is likely, as Alexander and Cæsar, and yet now their notable achievements do but serve to fill up the number of fables. Epitaphs and escutcheons, books and monuments, do all die as well as men. Our names, in all likelihood, will at last be buried and perish, as well as ourselves: for this world is the place where death reigns and plays the *rex*, not only over us, but over all the relics that we leave behind us.

What should we wish for, then, what should be the ardent desire of all nations, if they were believers, but the time of our Lord's appearing; *when this mortality*, as the apostle speaks, *shall be swallowed up of life*[b], and we shall receive from his hands laurels and crowns that are incorruptible, and never fade away; a name that shall never die; a glory that shall live and continue in its splendour as long as God himself? For as this is the time wherein death hath dominion; so that will be the time of abolishing its kingdom, and putting an end to all its tyranny, by setting up life and immortality in its stead.

[a] John vi. 40, 54, &c. [b] [2 Cor. v. 4.]

O welcome time, says the heavenly-minded soul, when this great devourer of the world shall have nothing left to feed upon, unless it be the grave, which shall die eternally, and never be heard of more! O what a joyful name is this of life, and of life for evermore! how sweetly doth even the word *immortality* sound in this land of death and destruction! What is it that makes our hearts so cold, and to feel so few desires to see the Prince of life appear; to see him, who shall raise up that in glory and power which was put into the earth in dishonour and weakness, and shall turn this natural, this corruptible body, into one that is spiritual and incorruptible?

Are we afraid this world will be burnt up by the brightness of his appearing? Do we pity our palaces and costly furniture, which we think are then in danger to be consumed? Are we concerned for our money and jewels, our ancient demesne and places of pleasure, our pictures and statues, with such like things, which we strive to perpetuate to all posterity? Will all these, do we fear, be in a flame, and serve for no other use than those great fires do wherewith we honour the coronations and victories of kings, or any other such like noble spectacle?

Let it be so; I see no cause to be troubled at it, when I remember that, together with these, the graves and the sepulchres, the tombs and such like monuments of death's conquests, the vaults and the charnel-houses, with every other trophy that sin hath erected, shall be cast into this huge bonfire, which shall be made, we conceive, by the conflagration of this globe of earth, to adorn our Saviour's triumph.

Why should we dread, O my soul, to behold such flames as these? Let us look and fix our eyes upon them as most cheerful blazes. Let us warm our hearts at the very thoughts of such fires; and though they should prove to be this world's funeral, yet let us rejoice in them as accompanying our most happy resurrection.

O death, I fear none of thy threatenings. O grave, I am not astonished any longer at thy darkness. I see the fatal day is coming, which shall put an end to both your dominions. And till then, I yield myself your subject, and intend not to struggle against your power. But I fear it not; because, unless you can prevent that day, or prevail against my Saviour, as well as over me, I am safe enough.

It is not much you can rob me of at present. The pleasures we enjoy in this crazy body are not so considerable that we should mightily lament the loss of them. Our friends indeed have taken such fast hold of our hearts, that we cannot easily consent to leave them; but setting them aside, what is it that you can take away which I am loath to part withal? And they, I consider, shall at last triumph together with me over your now prevailing power. We shall only part to meet again, and see you swallowed up in victory. And we shall be revived in bodies far more glorious with hearts full of more vigorous love; in which we shall live with endless pleasure, without any fears of being severed any more. Amen.

I wish thou wouldst come, O blessed Jesus, and carry us all to a place of secure and peaceful love, where we might sit together, and chant thy praises for ever.

V.

We cannot but be inclined to such meditations, and bear an affectionate love to our Lord's appearing, unless we be in love with sin; which at that time (we should further consider) shall quite cease, and not have so much as the least shadow of it remaining.

Are not all pious souls very much afflicted to think that God is every where so much dishonoured? is it not exceeding grievous to them to see his most high authority daily affronted. without any remedy for it, and that image he hath placed of himself in man, after such a lamentable manner, and without any remorse, continually mangled? Nay, is it not a considerable part of their trouble, that they are afraid lest, through the violence of temptations, or the weakness of their nature, or the inadvertency of their minds, by sudden surprises, they should add to the number of those disorders which are already so prodigiously increased? What is there, then, for which they can more reasonably wish, than that they may be delivered out of this fearful danger, and the heavens may be secured from this rude violence?

A blessing to be desired and expected, not only upon their own account, but in respect to our blessed Lord and Saviour also, who is now, we read, in the most holy place above, there presenting himself with his precious blood before God for us:

which he must continue to do till the time of his appearing be fulfilled; when he shall come out from thence *without sin*[b], as having discharged all his office in that heavenly sanctuary. While he stays therefore in that place, the care of all the people lies upon his shoulders; there is a daily charge he is to attend, that he may cure and expiate the sins of men. This is the constant employment of his high and royal priesthood, and it cannot cease till he come out again on the day of his appearing; which, it is manifest, will free both him and the world from this great burden of transgressions.

Then there shall never be any more objects of his pity and compassion. He shall have no sense then of our infirmities, no feeling of our pains, our grief and our anguish. Then he will cease to be afflicted with us, and be put to no further trouble about us; but be all delight, all joy, all complacence and pleasure in his members, who will be so well as to call for none of his care any more for ever.

And shall not the thoughts of this blessed time be our joy and pleasure too? We have very much reason to suspect our faith, if we can find such contentment here, that we would not have it make too much haste: for nothing is so sad to pious hearts, as that it seems to be so far off, and comes so slowly to them. They groan and sigh here under many weaknesses. They complain most heavily, and mourn under the weight of many imperfections; from which they would fain be delivered, that they may turn their sighs into songs of praise to the triumphant Captain of their salvation, Christ Jesus.

Nay, should we suppose there will be a time, before the end of all things, when righteousness will more universally prevail; which is the best sense that can be made of the saints' reigning upon the earth with Christ a thousand years (which some are persuaded is still to come); yet such and so many are the weaknesses that will hang upon us, and so great are the dangers to which they will make us subject, while we dwell in these earthly tabernacles, that good men would but be the more desirous our Lord would appear, to perfect what they saw so happily begun in their entire reformation to a better state.

O what a long time am I like to stay, cries such an op-

[b] Heb. ix. 28.

pressed soul, before I be eased of this burden, which is too heavy for me! How many days and years more must I spend under the load and pressure of this flesh and blood? Give me patience, dear Lord, to wait for that day which shall free me from it. Make me able to support myself in contentment with the hopes that the time of release at last will come.

I am so far from being unwilling that thou shouldst come, that I beseech thee to make me willing to stay till thou canst come. Only give me leave sometime to sigh and say, When wilt thou come? O when wilt thou come? Suffer me to wish most passionately that thou wouldst appear: be not angry with me if, in the agonies of my soul, I desire thou wouldst haste thine appearing.

And, in the mean time, increase my belief that thou, O compassionate Saviour, pitiest my weaknesses, and art not insensible of all my miseries; that so I may more comfortably hope thou wilt come and ease me and thyself both together. Bear up my sinking spirit till I be so happy; and by thine almighty power support me under the weight of all the fears and all the doubts that are apt to trouble me. And let not the dulness of my mind, or the heaviness of my heart, the distraction of my thoughts, or the deadness of my affections in thy most delightsome service, utterly deject me: but raise me up with a cheerful hope of thy salvation to a pitch of joy and gladness under all the burdens that oppress me.

I am forced indeed to sigh when I think of the many temptations to which, on every side, I am exposed. And more sad it is to think that they, at any time, have shaken, though not overthrown me. O the childish follies of a mind, which doth so much as listen to the treacherous allurements which would steal away my heart from its happiness! O the intolerable weakness of an heart which doth so much as waver in its resolved choice of so reasonable a service as that of thine, wherein I am engaged!

Pardon me, good Lord, that I call it intolerable. For I know I ought to bear it in hope of greater strength and of eternal settlement: and that I ought to rejoice I am not overcome by all the temptation wherewith I have been assaulted. Blessed be thy almighty grace that I have stood hitherto so steadfast, so unmovable in my duty; and that I have thy word

for it, thou wilt never leave me nor forsake me. It is only my love to thee which makes me complain, though not of the inconstancy, yet of the weakness of my love. The coldness of my affections, the listlessness of my devotions, my aptness to be tired and soon weary of the divinest pleasure and satisfaction, the unevenness of my temper, the sudden discomposures I feel in my spirit, are the things that often trouble me.

But I ought to remember that I am now in a body full of disorders; and that my life is a warfare which I ought patiently to accomplish. And I have great reason to bless thy name, O thou most glorious Conqueror of the devil and sin, by whose gracious aids my will standeth firm, and doth not yield or in the least consent to displease thy Majesty. By thy power I have and shall do valiantly. Thou shalt still tread down all mine enemies. *My soul shall make her boast in thee, O Lord, and be glad in thy salvation.* For I am continually with thee: who hast holden me by my right hand. *Thou shalt guide me with thy counsel, and afterward receive me to glory.*

Thus will I always hope in thee, if thou wilt but be pleased mercifully to bear with my incurable infirmities; to relieve my fainting spirit in this tedious pilgrimage, and to permit me to sigh sometime and say, O when will this long contest be ended? when will this war which my passions raise in my breast be concluded, and suffer me to live in tranquillity, and enjoy the sweetest pleasures of perfect peace? Yea, when shall all thine enemies throughout the world be disarmed, and there be no more rebellions against thy most sacred authority and thy sovereign will?

O come, sweet Jesus, come, thou Lord of peace; get thyself and us the victory, that we may be more than conquerors, and triumph in thy praise. Come, and bring this troubled spirit into thy serene and undisturbed regions above. Come, and give it the wings of an angel, that I may flee away and be at rest: that I may flee away from all the follies and from all the sorrows of this sinful life; and be at rest with thee, my dearest Lord.

At rest in that peaceful place, in that paradise above, where is no dangerous fruit to invite, no tempting Eve to solicit, no subtle serpent to deceive: but we shall all live like so many

gods indeed, perfectly wise and perfectly good; inviting one another only to praise and love thee with our united strength: thee, who art the first and the last; the beginner of our faith, and the finisher of our hope; the guide of our pilgrimage through the troublesome wilderness of this world, and the eternal rest of our wearied souls in that heavenly country which overflows with pleasures for evermore.

CHAP. XIV.

Two reasons more to induce us to raise our thoughts and affections to the appearing of our Lord.

VI.

And the very first step we shall take towards our heavenly rest will be so surprising, and advance us so far above our present imperfections, that it must needs, if we seriously consider it, make this appearing of his extremely desirable. Because all good men shall have the favour then to be snatched from this earth, and carried up into the air, to meet our Lord Jesus there, when he appears in his glory.

And who is there that understands himself who would not wish to be thus translated, rather than to stay here, though it were to see our Lord come to reign with his saints a thousand years upon the earth? Which Judaical conceit (as St. Hierom truly calls it) was embraced by many great men in ancient times, as a piece of the most orthodox faith. So Justin Martyr esteemed it; and Irenæus, with many others, were very zealous for it. And if they had thought more of spiritual delights, which the saints should have in that Sabbath (as they termed it) by the presence of our Lord, St. Austin[c], for his part, acknowledges it would have been a tolerable opinion, to which he himself was sometimes inclined. For all good men, as I said before, would be glad to see righteousness planted more universally in the earth, and prevailing over vice and wickedness, before the dissolution of all things. And yet, even then (should we suppose them to be so happy here) they would be

[c] Lib. xx. de Civ. Dei, c. 7. [tom. viii. col. 581.]

far more glad to behold our Lord appear in his glory to take them quite away from this earth: where, as long as they continue, they must needs be dull and heavy, cloudy and dark, and enjoy but little of him, till they quit this gross body of flesh and blood, and go up into a purer state of light, and vigorous life.

Which St. Paul hath given us hope we shall enter into at the appearing of our Lord. Who will descend from heaven with great acclamations (you heard before from 1 Thess. iv. 16.) to raise the dead and judge the world. And then his saints are not to remain any longer here, but a sudden *change* being made in them[d], both they who are then alive, and all those who are newly raised from the dead, shall be *caught up to meet the Lord in the air*[e]. There he will show himself, and not upon this earth. Thither they shall be carried up unto him, and not he come down hither unto them.

And if you well observe it, the apostle teaches you to believe that this ascent of the saints unto him will be in a very glorious manner. Just as he comes from heaven shall they go up thither; for St. Paul saith we shall be caught up *in the clouds*, as so many triumphal chariots sent to fetch us from this earth, and transport us to himself. Who when he stood before his judges to receive his sentence from them, thus describes his own coming to judge them;—*Hereafter ye shall see the Son of man sitting on the right hand of power, and coming in the clouds of heaven*[f]. Though now, that is, I am arraigned and condemned by you, as if I were the vilest of men; you shall one day see that I am the Son of God, by whom you shall be judged; for with amazement you shall behold me clothed with divine majesty, and coming as the vicegerent of the supreme Lord of all, to call you to an account. For every one knows that clouds are called the *chariot of God*[g]; and therefore *his coming in the clouds of heaven* can signify nothing else but his appearing in the glory and with the authority of his Father; as Lord of the world, that hath conquered all his enemies, and is come to pronounce the sentence of God upon them.

In such a splendid manner, with the like pomp and state, shall we be carried up to him, as so many princes going to

[d] 1 Cor. xv. 52. [e] Ver. 17. [f] Matt. xxvi. 64. [g] Psalm civ. 3.

wait upon him, and to receive the honour he will delight to confer upon us in the sight of all the world. Nay, it will be part of our honour to be conveyed to him, just as Elias, yea he himself ascended into heaven. For a *chariot of fire*[h] appeared for the transportation of the one, and *a cloud*[i], which is the same, received the other out of the apostles' sight.

O blessed day, O happy appearing, doth an heavenly-minded Christian often think with himself, when a sight of my Saviour will draw me up to him, to be where he is! O most glorious, most beautiful spectacle, when his beams which fall upon me shall make me ascend from this earth, as the vapours do before the rays of the sun! O the joy that will fill my heart, when I shall see those gilded chariots sent from my Saviour to fetch me unto himself!

How shall I sing when I am uncooped, and let out of this cage, (wherein I am now confined,) to accompany the free people of the air in their heavenly melodies! What a pleasure will it be to look behind me, as I fly up unto Jesus, and see what a poor spot this earth is, of which I shall then have taken my leave for ever! O how glad shall I be that I am to return no more to a place so dull, so dark, and so full of miseries! How happy shall I think myself that I am gone quite away from this vile orb, which will not seem then to my exalted soul so big as a pin's head! Nay, how joyful will it make me to find that I am at last ascended up so high, as to have lost the sight of this little globe, and of all the kingdoms and empires that it contains!

O my gracious Lord, pardon me if I be sometime apt to think that thou stayest too long before thou comest to call me up unto those heavenly places. This flesh is too unwieldy a load, when I think of that aërial state. It hath made me groan ever since thou madest me believe that thou wilt bestow a lighter garment upon my soul. Heretofore indeed I fancied nothing more than a body fresh and plump, a tall and proper stature, a fair face and beautiful features; and I was prone to envy those who dwelt in such fine and goodly palaces: but ever since the time that I heard of going into the air to meet with

[h] 2 Kings ii. 11. [i] Acts i. 9.

thee, my Lord, all the love they excite in my heart makes such habitations seem no better than stately prisons. I have looked upon myself and sweetest friends in our most healthy estate, and sighed to think that we were in chains and fetters. Nay, the best of these houses, I tell them, at certain seasons are but painted sepulchres, wherein the mind lies dead and buried.

It is thou therefore, O most blessed Lord, who hast made me to wish so earnestly for thine appearing. I owe these longings to the discovery which thou hast made to me of another and better world, whither thou intendest to transport me. And if I have a mind to begin my journey thither presently, if I would fain feel my wings so grown that they might be able to bear me up above this earth, if my soul sometimes would willingly be released from these chains, and have the freedom to leave this flesh, and if I wish withal that this flesh may be changed, and turned into a kind of spiritual being; I must ascribe it unto thee, who hast begot these desires in me, by telling me of a building of God eternal in the heavens when this earthly tabernacle is dissolved.

Thou hast revealed these things to me, that I might desire them; and who can desire them, and not wish withal that he might presently enjoy them? Let it not displease thee therefore, I beseech thee again, O my dearest Lord, if I say sometimes, I am weary of being here. Do not esteem me impatient if, in the agonies and pangs of love, I long to come up higher, and get as near as may be to thyself. Suffer me to pray thee that these walls of flesh may not long immure me and exclude me from thy face. At least open a window for my gasping soul, that I may look into the purer air, and please myself in the thoughts of the flight which I shall one day take to see thee and enjoy thee in unclouded bliss.

VII.

But there is something beyond all this to draw our affections from all things here, and to make us love and long for the coming of our Lord; and that is the *crown of righteousness*, which the apostle tells us, in this very place, shall then be given to all those who are thus piously disposed for it.

I cannot tell you how much is contained in these two words,

unless I should make another treatise little less than this: for a *crown* denotes the highest degree of honour, and *righteousness* signifies, in the holy language, not only freedom from all pain and punishment, but the enjoyment of the greatest felicity that the most bounteous goodness of God will bestow upon his faithful servants: no less than such a glory and happiness as our Lord himself hath received for a reward of his labours. For *we see Jesus,* (saith the apostle[l],) *who was made a little lower than the angels for the suffering of death, crowned with glory and honour.* So St. John saw him in a vision, (as he tells us Rev. xiv. 14,) sitting upon a *white* (i. e. a bright and shining) *cloud, having on his head a golden crown.*

And thus, our Lord hath caused it to be proclaimed in the gospel of his grace, it shall be done to all those whom God delights to honour. He hath shown in our blessed Saviour what he will bestow upon his constant followers: and in what he hath done for him, he hath shown also that *he is upright, and that there is no unrighteousness in him.* They may depend upon his word, and be confident he will not fail their expectation, but crown their faith and patience with immortal glory.

I say their patience, because he will have them wait long, and stay a great while before they receive this crown, which cannot be set upon their heads till the day of his appearing. He will take up all pious souls indeed into a state of joy and bliss, surpassing all that we can now conceive, as soon as they depart this life; but the perfection of it they must wait for till he have gathered the whole body of the faithful to him, that he may crown them all together. So the ancients understand that place, Heb. xi. 39, 40, as may be seen in Theodoret[m], Œcumenius[n], Theophylact[o], and others. And so the last named writer discourses at large upon Luke xxiii. 43, according to the doctrine of St. Chrysostom, whom he constantly follows: who pronounces that the soul lies ἀστεφάνωτος[p], 'uncrowned,' till the resurrection of the dead, which is the time when we shall all receive according to what we have done in the body, whether it be good or whether it be evil. Which was not his opinion alone, or the sense of some few others, but the current doc-

[l] Heb. ii. 9.
[m] [Tom. iii. p. 623.]
[n] [Tom. ii. p. 416 D.]
[o] [Tom. ii. p. 744 C.]
[p] In 1 Cor. xv. 19. [tom. x. p. 365 E.]

trine of the ancient fathers: who look upon that invisible place and state, wherein the souls of good men are before the resurrection, as so much inferior to that wherein they shall be afterward, that they have bestowed very different names upon them, expressing the imperfect, though very happy, condition in which we must remain, till our Lord will be pleased to appear for our consummation. It will not be amiss to mention the descriptions they give of both.

The place and state before the resurrection they call paradise; the bosom of Abraham; the feast of the patriarchs; the outward altar; below the altar; the porch of the sanctuary; the courts of the Lord; the custody and the storehouse of souls; secret receptacles; the hidden seats or tabernacles of the godly; convenient or due places; places meet for them, or worthy of them; the place of refreshment, of light, of peace; a portion of the spiritual rest; the rest of security; a certain retiring place of everlasting rest; a port of eternal security; the bright, the fragrant, the royal tabernacles; the earnest or pledge of the kingdom; the white raiment; a chamber in the palace royal; an habitation with God; the asylum, or place of refuge; with other such like names: which are so obvious, that none can fail to be acquainted with them who read the ancient doctors of our religion. Among whom St. Ambrose hath adventured to give us a very particular account of this state: which I shall set down, because it will be very pleasing to those who are desirous of some distinct conception of the happiness we hope for, before the resurrection, in the celestial tabernacles.

"Where the joy of just souls," saith he[q], "will be disposed *per ordines quosdam*, by certain orders, ranks, or degrees[r]. First, there is the joy that they have overcome the flesh, and were not crooked by its enticements. Secondly, that at the rate of their industry and innocence they enjoy security, and are not entangled like the souls of the wicked in errors and perturbations; and are neither tortured with the memory of their vices, nor vexed with the rage of solicitude and cares. Thirdly, that they are supported with the divine testimony of

[q] Lib. de Bono Mortis, cap. ii. [tom. i. coll. 408, 9.]
[r] [Referring to 2 Esdras vii. 49 sqq.]

their having observed the law; so that they are not in fear of the uncertain event of their deeds in the last judgment. Fourthly, because they begin to understand their rest and ease, and to foresee their future glory; and pleasing themselves with that consolation in their dwellingplaces, they live at ease with great tranquillity, environed with the guards of angels. And the fifth order or rank hath the sweetness of a most plentiful exultation or triumph, that they are escaped out of the prison of this corruptible body into light and liberty, and possess the promised inheritance: for there is an order of the rest, as there is of the resurrection. We shall all rise, *but every one in his order. Christ the first-fruits, then they that are Christ's, who believe his coming: and then is the end.* There shall be therefore a different order of dignity and glory, as there will be an order of deserts. So that in the sixth order, their countenance will begin to shine as the sun, and to be compared to the lights of the stars; but is such a brightness as cannot decay. And the seventh order will be, that they may exult with confidence and full assurance, and confide without any doubting, and rejoice without trembling; making haste to see his countenance, to whom they have devoted the obedience of a most diligent service: from whence, by the remembrance of an innocent conscience, they may presume a glorious reward of a small labour: which they beginning to receive, shall know that the sufferings of this present time are unworthy that so great a glory of an eternal recompense should be compared with them."

This is the order wherein he places just souls before our Lord come to bring them into his heavenly kingdom. And somebody under the name of St. Austin hath more briefly expressed it thus[s]: "We believe that when our soul is freed from the bonds of the flesh, if we have lived well and uprightly before God, the quire of angels will presently come to meet us, and troops of all the saints will run into our embraces, and bring us to supplicate the true Judge. Then peace will encompass us, and deep security. We shall fear no more the fiery darts of the devil, nor any other enemy that desires to cast our souls into danger. Not sword, not fire, not the cruel

[s] L. de Salutaribus Documentis, c. xl. [tom. vi. Append. col. 201 B.]

face of the tormentor, not hunger, not thirst, nor any sickness. The flesh shall no longer be contrary to the spirit, nor shall we fear any danger; but, having cast off the burden of the flesh, the Holy Spirit (to whom we had before given a mansion in our body) will give us a mansion in heaven. And so we shall joyfully and gladly expect the day of judgment; in which the souls of all men shall receive rewards according to their deeds."

Now that place and state into which we shall be admitted then, they call the highest heaven; the inner altar; above the altar; the house of God; the seat of Christ; the celestial kingdom; the heavenly inheritance; the goods of the kingdom; the consummation of glory; the reward of immortality; the distribution of royal donatives; perfect joy; the expected reward; the end of all good; the entire reward of deserts; the time of crowns; the kingdom of fruition; the perfect participation of good things, with other names of the like import: which signify something much beyond what we shall enjoy before our Lord's appearing.

I shall conclude what they say of both these states with the words of St. Austin, in his exposition upon St. John[t]. "All souls," saith he, "when they go out of this world, have their different receptions: the good have joy, and the evil have torment. But when there shall be a resurrection, the joy of the good shall be more ample, and the torment of the bad more grievous. The holy patriarchs are received in peace, and so are prophets, apostles, martyrs, and the good faithful; but all these are still in the end to receive that which God hath promised. For even the resurrection of the flesh is promised, the consumption of death, and eternal life with the angels. This we shall all receive together: but as for the rest which is given presently after death, every man receives it, if he be worthy of it, when he departs from hence. The patriarchs received it first, afterwards the prophets, and more lately the apostles, and still more lately the holy martyrs, and every day the good faithful," &c.

And with these more ancient words of Irenæus, who discourses in this manner[u]: "Since our Lord went away in the

[t] Tract. xlix. [tom. iii. part 2. col. 623 D.]

[u] [Contr. Hær. lib. v. cap. 31. tom. i. p. 331.]

midst of the shadow of death, to that place where the souls of the dead are, and afterward was raised corporally; and after his resurrection was taken up into heaven; it is manifest that the souls of his disciples also (for whom the Lord wrought these things) shall go into the invisible place appointed to them by God; and shall stay there till the resurrection, expecting the resurrection. Afterward receiving their bodies, and rising again perfectly, that is, corporally, as our Lord also rose again, so they shall come to the sight of God: for no disciple is above his Master; but every one that is perfect shall be as his Master. As our Lord therefore did not straightway, flying from hence, depart to heaven, but, expecting the time of the resurrection appointed of the Father (which was foresignified in Jonas) after three days rising again, was taken up into heaven; even so we also ought to wait with patience the time appointed by God for our resurrection foretold by the prophets; and so, rising again, be taken up, as many of us as the Lord shall account worthy of it."

And whosoever shall be thought *worthy of that world* (as our Lord speaks[w]) and *of the resurrection of the dead*, they will be filled, no doubt, with inconceivable joy, to meet so many pious souls, and so many friends, who will be all assembled at that time to receive the reward they have so long waited for. "For if all the faithful be one body" (as St. Chrysostom, or the author of the Commentary on the Hebrews[v] under his name, speaks), "it will be a greater pleasure to this body to be crowned all together, than if it should be done by parts. For the righteous even in this are admirable, that they rejoice in the good of their brethren as well as their own: and therefore this will be according to their hearts' desire, that they shall be crowned with their fellow members; for it is a great satisfaction to be glorified together."

Of which since we have so sure an expectation, "and the just (as St. Ambrose speaks in the place forementioned[x]) have such a recompense, that they shall see the face of God, and behold that light which enlightens every man; what should we all do from henceforward, but, as he says, put on this resolu-

[v] In Heb. xi. 40. [tom. xii. p. 256 A.]
[w] [Luke xx. 35.]
[x] [col. 410.]

tion, and study that our souls may draw near to God, that our prayer may draw near to him, that our desire may cleave unto him, and we may never be separated from him? Even while we remain here, let us be fast knit to God, by meditating, by reading, by seeking; and endeavour to know him as we are able. For we know here but in part, because all things here are imperfect, there in their perfection. Here we are little children; there we shall be strong men. *We see here*, saith St. Paul, *as in a glass, darkly; but there face to face.* There with open face we shall behold the glory of God; which here our souls, being involved in flesh and blood, and sullied with their spots, cannot behold sincere. For who, saith he, can see my face and live? How should we, since our eyes cannot endure so much as the rays of the sun, which would put them out if we should fix them on so great a light? How can we behold, then, the shining countenance of our Creator, while we are wrapt up in the rags of this flesh?"

We must stay for so glorious a sight till that happy day when we shall be unclothed, or rather clothed upon with the garments of celestial light. That is the time, and not till then, when he designs to do us the great honour of setting the crown of righteousness upon our heads. Now is the time of toils (as he speaks in another place), of agonies, of combats, of conflicts, of strife for victory; then is the time of refreshments, of crowns, of retributions, of rewards, of resurrection, and of the restitution of all things: which ought to make all serious believers look for that day with earnest longings, and lift up their heads above this visible world, as men desirous to receive this glorious diadem; in comparison with which the most goodly fillets that ever bound any imperial brow are not worthy so much as to be named.

O that glorious crown, purer than the finest gold! (is a pious heart inclined to say;) that crown of righteousness and of life, which my Lord hath so dearly purchased for me with his precious blood! how do I covet it! how desirous am I, how do I long to be partaker of it! My head beats and aches, and cannot be at rest, till this crown, by his royal hand, be set upon it: it is in pain till, instead of these clouds wherewith it is surrounded, it be encompassed in a circle of purer and brighter

thoughts: it is sorely oppressed till these vain dreams and frivolous imaginations, which gather about it, fly away, and it be enfolded in a wreath of nobler contemplations. O how heavy is it till this giddiness of mind wherein I am whirled be exchanged for a steady orb of light, wherein my soul, I hope, one day shall be unmovably centred!

I long to have these ashes blown away, wherein the sparks of divinity lie raked up in our eclipsed nature. O when will that sweet breath come that shall make them shine, and set them free to fly to their element above? When shall those flashes of light which sometime break forth be blown up into a clearer and more constant flame? Can one believe, and not wish to find himself in the house of God, in the midst of the heavenly ministers, surrounded with such glorious sights as eye never saw, nor heart can possibly conceive? I am not able to refrain from saying, O when shall I see my mind encircled in the rays of divine light? when shall it beam forth in such heavenly thoughts, and make my heart burn and sparkle with such ardours of love, that they shall cast a glory round about my head?

This is the crown which my soul desires to wear: this is the garland I would win, the glorious diadem wherewith my restless mind would be adorned. It is not silver and gold, pearls and precious stones, or any such like things (whose rich names I borrow to express my present thoughts), that I wish and desire; but the brightness of the knowledge of God to fold itself about my head, and that I may sit environed in a ring of admiring thoughts, of pure, undisturbed, never-ending thoughts of thee, and of thy marvellous kindness towards me.

Which happiness till my mind enjoy, the pain that I feel will not cease, unless thou, Lord, wilt be pleased to assuage it by comfortable hopes and joyful expectations of such an eternal weight of glory. Even when I have left this world, and am come to those lightsome tabernacles which thou hast prepared for those that truly love thee, I shall long to know more of thee, and desire still to be nearer to thee, and look to see thee come out of thy royal palace, to crown the faith and hope of thine obedient servants.

And in the mean time may I be so happy as to be disposed into the order of those who perpetually talk of thy love, and

sing thy praises, and rejoice with perfect confidence and full assurance, and are ever lifting up their heads to see thee, and often saying one to another, When will he come? when will he appear in the highest and most exalted glory? O blessed day, when, mixed with the quire of saints, we shall fly in their company to meet the Spouse, and say, every one of us, *I have found him whom my soul loveth*[x]*!* I have found him, the sight of whom I shall lose no more, but, endued with the glory of immortality and the splendour of incorruption, shall live for ever with the Lord!

O happy state of saints, when they shall have "flesh without earth, a body without sense of pain, a soul without fear, life without death, age without time, light without night, and blessedness without end!... Christianity will never let us be satiated with these delectable thoughts. This is its refreshment, this is its delight, this is its pleasure and joy; in mind and heart to go to the seat of God, and there to take its place, and seize on its share in that seat, not by its own presumption, but by the promise of God: who hath already exalted our Lord Christ in that blessed place; and, by our relation to him, we challenge a right to be so happy. For he is the Head of his body the church; he is the Head of all principality and power: *from whom all the body by joints and bands having nourishment ministered, and knit together, increaseth with the increase of God*[y]."[z]

CHAP. XV.

Three considerations more to draw our affections to the appearing of our Lord.

VIII.

I HAVE already said so much of the happiness we expect when our Lord shall come again, that here I might put an end to this discourse; if it would not be more profitable distinctly to consider, that after we are caught up from this earth to meet the Lord in the air, and he hath done us honour in the sight of all the world, we shall all (as I have already suggested) march with him unto heaven, in goodly array and comely

[x] [Cant. iii. 4.] [y] Col. ii. 19.

[z] Ex L. de Viro perfecto, sub nom. S. Hieron. [tom. xi. col. 63 F.]

order, with those crowns of glory which he hath given us upon our heads. This should mightily move us to love his appearing; that we shall then appear together with him, and not abide in the air, though encompassed with so much glory, but be carried up with him far higher, into the purest sky.

When our minds are made all light, we shall see a vast way before us, and behold the palace where God himself dwells, inviting us unto it. Thither our Lord will have us attend upon him and accompany him, when he hath finished the judgment of the great day: where the holy books inform us we shall be sumptuously treated, with no less kindness, magnificence, and joy, than a king, we may conceive, would entertain his only son, when he brought home his beloved bride, whom he had long ago espoused to himself; for whose reception he prepares the most royal supper, a glorious marriage-feast, to welcome her unto his house.

And will not this make every faithful soul who is a holy member of that body the church, whom our Lord is pleased to own for his bride, still more desirous, if not impatient, of the coming of the celestial Bridegroom, to perfect his love, and complete the promises wherein he stands engaged by the gracious covenant he made with us when he contracted us to himself? What is there that we all so much covet as the excess of joy and the highest pitch of pleasure? and where are these to be found in so much purity, in such fulness, and so perpetual, as in his most blessed presence? Which should force us to burst out with the greatest earnestness, when we think of that heavenly feast which he hath prepared for us, into such expressions as those of David:

As the hart panteth after the water brooks, so panteth my soul after thee, O God. My soul thirsteth for God, even the living God; O when shall I come and appear before God[a]*?* I have small satisfaction, alas! in these dull and short delights, which I find on earth. What taste is there in this green trash? And there is little other fruit that grows in the garden of this world but what is sour and harsh, and sets my teeth on edge. It is too far from thy beams to bring forth any thing very sweet. Nothing can be ripened at this distance from thee, to satisfy a soul and yield it all the contentment it desires.

[a] [Ps. xlii. 1, 2.]

Bring me therefore into thy paradise above. O conduct me into thy Eden, the garden of thy delights. Lead me to those fruits which are brought to maturity by the constant presence of the Sun of righteousness. Let me feast on those pleasures which are all pleasure: and enter into the joy which is fulness of joy for evermore.

And till thou thinkest me meet for such entertainments, may it please thy love but to give me some tastes of their incomparable sweetness. May I relish no joys so much as those. May I always have the remembrance of them fresh upon my soul. And may I be so happy as to be preserved, by the savour of them, from the sinful allurements of all other pleasures.

Hence, hence, all you beggarly delights, which would have me forget my happiness. Stand aside, you images of true joy, and hinder not my prospect of that heavenly paradise. Lend me your help, or else get you gone, and trouble me no more. Assist my benighted thoughts, and represent that blissful place to them; or else I desire not your company. I have eaten of all your dainties; but still am empty and void of satisfaction. I know what you have to say, the very utmost you can offer me; therefore follow me with no further importunities: for my heart is set on that fair, that delicious place, where the great Lord keeps his court, and entertains his friends with endless pleasures.

O holy city of God, what glorious things are spoken of thee! How free, how sprightly, and how full of joy, are all thy happy inhabitants! What heart is there that is so dull as not to long to dwell in that blessed place, where every head wears a crown of life, and every hand carries a palm of victory? where every eye overflows with joy, and every tongue with psalms of praise? where light shines in every face, and love smiles in every countenance? where every heart is perfectly satisfied in the fulness of its own bliss, and satisfied again with the pleasure it hath to see the felicity of others?

It is too much trouble to me that I am not there; O let me not lose the thought of it too. I sigh to think that I stand at such a distance from my Father's house; and shall I suffer a further remove, by turning away my eyes from thence? Go, O my soul, go thither in thy thoughts and daily meditations.

Send a thousand wishes before thee thither, to tell thy Lord that thou art coming to him.

Say, *Whom have I in heaven but thee;* who wentest thither to open it to all thy faithful followers? What have I on earth, but my hope, by following thee, to arrive at last where thou art gone before me? Whither should I look but unto heaven, now that thou, my dearest Lord, art ascended thither to prepare a place for me? a place of rest and secure peace; a place of joy and constant enjoyment; a place from whence I am loath my thoughts or my heart should descend, to return to this poor earth again: for there they grow so dull, that it is hard to lift them up to look to thee.

O keep them with thee, keep them with thee, thou King of heaven! Settle and fix them there, where I myself expect to be; where thou also expectest me; where they shall find ease for every grief, and joy in the midst of the greatest tribulation. O fix them unmovably in this quiet place, this eternal rest. And when they must attend the affairs of this lower life, may they only look, not come, down to them; and still remain and stay with thee.

IX.

And when these things shall be fulfilled, the apostle tells us, in the place beforenamed [a], that we shall *be always with the Lord:* who passed his promise to his disciples a little before he left the world, that he would *come again, and receive them to himself, that where he is, there they may be also* [b]. Of which promise he was so mindful after he went to heaven, that he further informs St. Paul (who spake this *by the word of the Lord*) that he will not part with us, when he hath conducted us to his Father's house; but keep us *ever* with him there, in joys and pleasures that never fade away.

A condition which we cannot but love and passionately long for, if we have any love for him or for ourselves. For there are none of our enjoyments here but must be frequently intermitted, and are too often interrupted. Even the enjoyment of our blessed Lord himself, and the sense he gives us of celestial things, we find to our sorrow, suffers this inconvenience. Neither are we diverted from them only by the troubles of this

[a] 1 Thess. iv. 17. [b] John xiv. 3.

life, or the violence of other worldly temptations, which press too boldly and rudely upon us: but by the most necessary occasions, and the most innocent fruitions; to which nature not only inclines us, but requires our frequent attendance.

Of how much of our time doth sleep possess itself, though we desire never so earnestly to continue awake! How little do we live in the account of reason, if we do but remember this image of death, which hath us so many hours, every night, in its arms! And yet besides this, eating and drinking, journeys and visits, the businesses and cares of this life, which challenge some of our thoughts, devour nobody knows how great a portion of every day. To say nothing of those hours, when we are fit for little or nothing; but are forced to find, as we significantly speak, some pastime for the entertainment of our wearied minds.

O blessed Jesus, how few are the minutes that these souls, inclosed in flesh, can spend in thy company! Into what a little room are the thoughts of thee, and of thy unmeasurable love, most wretchedly crowded! How soon are we weary, and how often are we forced away, when we have the greatest mind to thy sweet society! O the cares that not only divert, but sometimes oppress us! O the multitude of troubles which are wont to disquiet us! the sicknesses and infirmities of our bodies, which indispose us! besides the great weakness and feebleness of these spirits, which are not able long to bear thee company!

It is but a wish, I see, that I may always stay with thee. I feel myself pulled away, and cannot keep my soul above, even when thou hast lifted it up unto thee. And therefore I cannot but renew my desires, that thou wouldest be pleased to hasten thy coming. That is the time I long to see, because I would be ever with thee, and always behold thy face; and perpetually speak of thee; and declare thy love without ceasing, in the height of love and devotion to thee.

O what a change will that day make in me; when I shall be all life, and see not so much as the image or shadow of death any more! When I shall neither slumber nor sleep, much less be sick, or grow old and die; but always wake, and enjoy a perfect health, a vigorous youth, and immortal life! O the blessedness of that change, when I shall be hungry no more,

nor have my head disturbed with the fumes and clouds of food! when all my journeys will be at an end, and I shall never lose nor leave the company I love! when I shall neither be crossed by others, nor vexed with the violence of my own passions! when I shall be no more perplexed with cares, nor damped with fears; but dwell secure, in assured joys, for evermore!

Joys in the perfection of a glorified body, and of an exalted, enlarged spirit! Joys to find myself in the company of thy saints, and welcomed into the noble society of angels! Joy at the sight of my dearest friends; the greatest joys in thy presence, and in the light of thy countenance, from whom I hope for all this joy!

O come, most blessed Saviour, that we may all be nothing but joy, and love, and peace, without any end. Come, and bring us to our beloved rest; and where can our souls find any rest but in thy bosom? Come, that we may rest from our labours; and where can we lay down ourselves in perfect repose, but only in thy love? O come, and fill our hearts therewith; that we may hunger and thirst no more. Come, that we may perfectly know what the new wine of thy kingdom is. Come, that we may desire to feed on nothing else, but the sweetest comforts of seeing thy blessed face smiling on us: and that we may have no other business, nothing else to do, but to enjoy thee in all that we see: not so much employment besides, as to spend any time (as now we are forced to do) in wishing to enjoy thee.

X.

And yet there is still a greater reason remaining why we should *love our Lord's appearing;* because we shall be brought by that to the very top and highest pitch of bliss; which is to *see God*[c], and to *see him as he is*[d]. Not as the old prophets saw him, in visions and dreams: nor as others saw him, in the angels of his presence: but ——— alas, who can tell what this sight is? What tongue, unless touched, as the apostles' were, by the Holy Ghost, can declare any thing of such a bliss? The day of *pentecost* must return again, if we expect to have any language to express or thoughts to conceive the meaning of these words. We must entreat some angel to come and tell

[c] Matt. v. 8. [d] 1 John iii. 2.

us, if he can, what it is to *see God*. Or rather, we must confess that, if he should, we cannot understand such celestial language. It is above our reach; and we do but babble, we do not speak, when we adventure to discourse of it.

Nay, when we depart this world, and shall be admitted into the blessed company above, we may not be able to comprehend much of it; if the opinion of many of the ancient fathers be true, that the saints shall not enjoy that which is properly meant by the *vision of God*, till after the great day of our Lord. And therefore it will be our best way now to do as the painter did; who, being to make a picture of love, drew nothing on his table but a veil; which covered nobody knew what under the shadow of it. Not so much to show, as some have poorly conceived, that love is blind, as to declare that it is an ineffable thing, a mysterious passion, not to be described by human art. Such, I am sure, is this *vision* of God; and such is the love that it will beget. It is a secret never to be known, but by the enjoyment of it: a mystery reserved in the holy place, to be beheld only by entering into it.

We have all a natural desire indeed to pry into this as well as all other secrets. A strong appetite we find within us to be admitted into an intimate acquaintance with those things which are closely locked up from us. We cannot choose but long to go within the veil, and would fain have the curtain drawn aside, that the glorious face of the divine Majesty may appear. But after all our search and busy inquiry, we are able to say no more at present but this:

O happy darkness! O blessed, O most glorious obscurity! for I do not know what else to call thee; how joyful is it to think that thou art more than we can ask or think! What a pleasure is it to know that thou surpassest all that can now be known! How comfortable is it to believe that thou art hid from our eyes, only because we are not capable to behold thy brightness!

Thou shamest indeed hereby our small understanding, but publishest thine own most excellent greatness. We are laid very low, when we hear thee speaking thus, at present; but it lifts us up and highly exalts us in our future hopes. We have no means to comprehend this gracious promise; nor know we what to think when we read these words, *you shall see God*.

We must confess our weakness, which is absolutely puzzled with so few and so plain words. If we have any thing to boast of, it is only this advantageous ignorance. All that we have to glory in is, that (such our hopes) we know not what to conceive of this dark, (so we must now speak,) this unseen and hidden brightness.

But this we know, because thou, O God, hast told us, that when this present darkness is done away, and we shall *see thee as thou art, we shall be like thee.* O most desirable sight, which will so happily transform us! O much wished for day, which will set us in such a light as will make us all bright and shining too! Shining in the light of the wisdom of God; in the light of his purity, and of his bliss and immortality. In the light which makes the eyes of angels shine so brightly, and which preserves the youth of saints. The light which no man can approach unto, till thou, O God, who art that light, shalt finish our hope, and bring us to see thee face to face.

And may we not be confident of this also, (though we know so little,) that when thou, O blessed God, shalt cause thy Son to appear, and shalt show thyself unto us, the very first glimpse of thy glory, at the greatest distance from thee, will mightily attract our hearts unto thee? No arrow, sure, flies more swiftly from the strongest bow, no bullet can be sent with greater violence from the bended force of steel, than our souls shall then move, or rather shoot themselves towards thee, that they may know what it is to see thee, and that they may be like thee.

And till that joyful day shall come, shine thou, O blessed Light, perpetually in these eyes. Strike through all the clouds that encompass me round about; and by the bright hopes of thee chase away all my gloomy thoughts, and put out the false lustre of this deceitful world. Shed, O thou blessed Light, thy glorious beams into this heart, and kindle there such holy flames as may consume all sinful desires, and purify my soul as thou art pure. Let me burn continually with an ardent love of thee, till thy bright day appear. Till not only these walls of flesh be pulled down, which intercept thee from me; but my spirit fly up in a lightsome body that I may see thee.

That I may see thee, by whose power the heavens and the earth were made; thee by whose wisdom all things are

governed; thee by whose infinite kindness mankind was redeemed. What a joy will it be to me to see thee, who didst conduct me in my way; direct me at every turn; support me in every step; assist me in all the various passages of my life; secure me from innumerable temptations; preserve me from as many dangers; and at last broughtest me safe to see thee, and rejoice with thee for ever!

CHAP. XVI.

Of the mighty power and pleasure of love when it is settled in the heart.

And thus I am come to the end of this other part of my discourse: wherein the reasons of placing our best affections on the appearing of Christ have been so plainly deduced, that, as they cannot but be understood, so they cannot but move those hearts which do not quite turn away their minds from all consideration of them: and that it should be hard to do, one would think, if we have the least acquaintance with the Christian religion. Which hereby most strongly recommends itself unto us, that it gives us such great and glorious hopes, and entertains our tiresome pilgrimage with such delightful contemplations of the joys and pleasures we shall have in another world; especially when we come to rest with our Lord for ever.

No man that is in his wits would be without the comfort of this expectation. It far exceeds all our present enjoyments; and is in itself so desirable, that we may truly say, Faith doth not beg to be admitted by us, but rather commands us to open our hearts and let it in, if we would have any constant pleasure and settled peace and satisfaction there, which nothing but the Christian belief can establish in us. And this is the misery of all those who do not faithfully receive the gospel; that as they shall miss of the greatest blessings hereafter, so they want the highest comfort in the world at present: which is, to wait with assured hope for those good things which our Lord will give us at his appearing. By the expectance of which we are not only a little pleased while we employ our

minds in such meditations as these; but they put us into a state of pleasure and constant satisfaction, by drawing our hearts to heaven, and placing us out of the power, though not out of the reach, of all worldly accidents.

For such is the condition of man, as the disciples of Plato's school have well expressed it, that there are two effusions and ecstacies, as we may call them, of his soul; two sorts of inebriation (as some of them love to speak) whereby he is dispossessed of himself. By the one (which is a divine rapture) we are carried out and placed above ourselves; by the other, (which is the witchery of sense,) we are hurried away, and thrust down into a condition below ourselves. Their meaning is, that man being of a middle nature, between angels and beasts, by his intellectual part partaking of the nature of those heavenly beings, and by his sensitive of the nature of the brutes, he may so apply himself either to the one or to the other, that he come, in great measure, out of his middle condition, and go either upward to the former or downward to the latter.

And this strange feat is wrought by nothing else but by the power of love; which evidently entrances our souls, and transports us out of ourselves: either to the celestial natures, if it be divine, or to the brutish, if it be founded only in the flesh. By exercising our minds in the actions of spiritual life, and placing our affections on things above, we may deliver and enfranchise ourselves from a servile base condition, and approach nearer to the degree of angels than of ordinary men: as, on the contrary, by applying our minds and hearts wholly to corporeal actions, and addressing all our services to the things of this world, we may so enthral ourselves, and bring our souls into such bondage, that we shall sink down into a vile estate, and become more like beasts than men.

O strange power of love, which makes such transformations! turning men either into angels or into the most sordid creatures. How careful should we be to observe its motions! What diligence should we use to watch whither it goes, and to see that this mighty passion be directed to the most excellent good! And if we do but open our eyes to receive the light of the glorious gospel, and all the beauties that it presents unto us, we cannot easily be deceived. There are a world of noble

enjoyments to which our Saviour invites us, if we will vouchsafe to look upon them, and not be so sottish as to fasten our eyes only on a few objects here before us. He hath opened to us the kingdom of heaven; and tells us he will show us all the glory of his Father's house, if we will but wait a while, till he be ready to come and fetch us thither. Why should we not believe him, and daily look up unto him, with hearts full of joy that we are beloved of the Lord of life, and have a good hope to live together with him? What a change would this work in us! and how happy should we be to think of the far more glorious change which the sight of him will make, when, by seeing him, we shall become what he is!

O the joy that begins to spring up in my heart! O what ravishing words are those, *We shall be like him; for we shall see him as he is!* How sweetly they enter into mine ears! How deliciously they spread and diffuse themselves all over my mind, and strongly penetrate to my very heart! I am changed already. I am not what I was, but quite another man: all light and joy, all spirit and life while I think of these things. And can I ever so forget them as to be allured and drawn away from myself and my Saviour, from my enjoyments and my hopes, by any earthly pleasures?

What comparison is there between those two states I now described, that I should be in danger of such temptations? Is there any need to ask which is most to be chosen? to suffer my heart to be touched with such a sense of divine pleasures as to be ravished out of myself, and become more than man; or to expose it so to the solicitations of sensible delights, as to be enticed by them another way out of myself, and transformed into the nature of the beasts that perish?

We are all desirous and forward enough to climb higher; and our ambition tempts us to mount to as noble a station as it is possible to reach: and therefore let us ascend, O my soul, to the Lord Jesus; let us lift up our thoughts still towards the holy place where he reigns, and look for the time of his appearing to make us reign with him for ever. This is the most pleasant object we can behold, or rather is a collection of innumerable pleasures, which all here meet together; and therefore cannot but be of mighty power to ravish our spirits and

ennoble our natures by making them divine. Hither let us vigorously and cheerfully bend our thoughts; let our hearts send many and many a wish this way, and then it will be as impossible for any thing to hinder us from being made heavenly, as it is to keep the stone from its centre, or the tenderest heart from becoming like to that which it dearly loves.

Here we see what God the Father Almighty will do for his Son Jesus, and what our Lord Jesus will do for us who depend upon his love. We behold ourselves here ranked among the heavenly host; changed into spirits; made perfect in love; crowned with immortality; beautified with the light of divine knowledge and with unspotted purity of heart; brought into the presence of our Lord, and unto the sight of God. On which incomparable happiness while we fix our eyes, it must needs snatch us quite from all other things, and make us live out of ourselves; but it will be only to place us above ourselves, and, by a most desirable departure from what we are, to put us into so blessed a condition, that we shall never wish to return to ourselves any more.

And indeed the more or less our souls are drawn forth of themselves either way, so much the harder or easier it is to go back into themselves again. For if we be much ravished with these heavenly things; if we love the appearing of Christ exceedingly, and attentively fix our minds in expectation of it; we shall have little mind to turn our hearts towards corporeal enjoyments, during the sense and lively relish of those divine pleasures which have withdrawn us from them. And when the inclinations and necessities of our earthly nature call us back again unto them, it will be with a remembrance of those celestial joys still remaining, which will preserve our souls from immersing themselves in things below them. Just as when a man's heart is engaged in the strictest bonds of love, which have tied him fast to a very agreeable person, whatsoever company he comes into, he will secretly steal out of it, to cast a glance upon that beloved object; so will our mind be apt to look up towards heaven (even when we are in the charming society of that person), if the Lord and the glory of his appearing be our chiefest love and highest delight. As, on the contrary, if we have but a slight touch and taste of these heavenly truths, we shall be the easier diverted from them, and per-

suaded to yield up ourselves to seek our satisfaction in the cold enjoyment of these earthly delights.

And thus it is, in like manner, when men follow brutal pleasures; the more strongly they are ravished with them, and addict themselves to them, the more they lose the use of their reason and understanding, and the more uncapable they grow, being so attentive to these delights, to receive any gust of nobler enjoyments: whereas, if our taste of these things be more superficial, and we do not apply our minds with all their force unto them, nor dwell upon them, we shall be the easier called off from them, and stand in need of fewer importunities to quit their company for better entertainments.

Which demonstrates how necessary it is that we should endeavour to be well acquainted with the coming of our Lord; to believe it with an unshaken faith; to persuade ourselves of it as if we saw it; to set our hearts upon it, and place our comforts in it; that so it may have the greater authority over us, and command us irresistibly from all things beneath us, and force us to give ourselves entirely to our Lord Jesus.

CHAP. XVII.

Of the means whereby this love may be settled in our hearts; and the benefit thereof.

And, for the better effecting this which so nearly concerns us, we ought, as to think frequently and seriously of it, so to use all the means that are in our power to represent our blessed Lord and his glorious appearing in the most lively manner unto our hearts. Among which, I believe, you will find none more effectual than to frequent his society in the communion of his body and of his blood; where we not only meet with a fair occasion both to imprint upon our hearts a sense of his love, and to express all the love we have to him, but have a most powerful instrument also put into our hands, to enkindle and stir up the most hearty, vehement, and burning affection towards him.

For there he is set before our eyes in such a posture of love as cannot but wound any heart that hath the grace to consider what it sees. There we behold him hanging for our sake upon

a cross; from whence his mighty love shoots the most piercing darts into our breasts. We see him there in such flames as offered him up entirely to do the will of God; and, if we come near them, will touch us so sensibly, that we shall be disposed to make ourselves also a devout oblation to him. His body broken, his blood shed, his very life sacrificed for our safety, are there so evidently and distinctly set before our eyes; that as it will be hard for us not to be tenderly affected with his astonishing love to us, so we are hereby assured of his continued kindness till he bring us to eternal life.

We do not indeed behold him there as *sitting on the throne of his glory,* nor as *appearing again the second time to give us salvation;* but yet it plainly shows us what he underwent to purchase for us as well as for himself that glory wherein he is, and bids us rest satisfied he will do more for us, even all that he hath promised: of which, by these tokens and pledges of his love, which he hath left behind him when he departed this world, he doth most affectionately assure us. And by partaking of them we become also one body with him, and have communion with him in his death and passion, and all the benefits he hath thereby obtained for his church: among which this is the last and the greatest, that *we shall be with him where he is, and see the glory which the Father hath given him.* We ought not to doubt of it, being thus incorporate with him, and so united to him, that in him we already live and reign and are glorious; and can no more fail of appearing at last with him in his glory, than the members can fail to be advanced, when the head, to which they are firmly and inseparably joined, is highly honoured and dignified.

As a loving wife, therefore, married to an husband most completely qualified, but gone into a remote country, cannot but fix her thoughts very much upon his coming, and often wish for the happy day which will bring them nearer, and make them meet and live together; and, in the mean time, if she have his picture exactly taken, cannot refrain from looking often on it, and pleasing her eyes and her mind with the very shadow of that dear person; or if she have any token of his love left or sent her, whereby to remember him, is ever and anon taking it into her hands, and imprinting her kisses on it: so it becomes all those to do who pretend any love to our Lord

Jesus; who hath endeared himself to us by such incomparable lovingkindness, and merited so highly of us, that it would be exceeding strange if we should be either insensible of his favours, or let them slip out of our minds, when (among the rest of the expressions of his wonderful love) he hath taken great care to preserve the remembrance of them there.

Our gracious Lord, the Bridegroom of our souls, is gone a long journey, even as far as heaven. He hath espoused us to himself, it is true, in great love, most assured love; but hath left us for a time here in this world, and removed himself so far from us, that though there be nothing so desirable as his company to those who are acquainted with him and have any affection for him, yet they find the distance is so exceeding great between them, that they cannot attain their much wished for enjoyment of him. And therefore every good soul should look towards him, and, sighing within itself, should often say, When will he come, when will he come, and let me have the long desired sight of him? when will he come, and finish what he hath so graciously begun? O that he would come, and take me to him! O that he would come, and satisfy this soul, which is ready to dissolve, and sweetly melt into that blissful union with him! And, till he please to grant this desire, we should often fasten our expecting eyes on the picture he hath left us of himself, drawn, as I may say, by his own hand; which tells us he will certainly come, and requires us to rest assured he will be as good as his word, and give us immortal life in the glory where he is. We should frequent, I mean, the holy sacrament of his body and blood; we should love there to communicate with him and knit ourselves to him; it should be our greatest pleasure to solace ourselves in that representation of him till he comes. We should affectionately receive into our hands those tokens and pledges of his love which he continually sends us by his ministers; we should take them into our mouths, yea, let them into our hearts; and, embracing him in those signs and seals of his grace towards us, should rejoice in his love, till he himself appear, and lay our souls to rest in his bosom for ever.

If there were no other benefit we should receive by this means than that thereby our love will be mightily excited towards him who hath loved us so dearly, it were sufficient to

commend this duty to us: but we shall also grow thereby more confident of his appearing again to perfect his love towards us; and in the mean time be still receiving fresh tokens of the affection he now hath for us. For as the thought of his love hath the greatest power over our hearts; so we need not fear to say, that the love he sees in us is of such force and efficacy with him, that it strongly moves his tender compassions towards us. *If any man love me* (saith he himself), *he shall be loved of my Father, and I will love him, and will manifest myself to him*[a]. O what a word is this, *I will love him!* how it pierces into the heart! how it stirs and works, how it revives and refreshes there! Can there be any thing greater than this, to be beloved of the Lord of heaven, the Prince of life, the King of glory? What will not he do for those whom he loves, when we see he did not stick to die for them, even before they loved him?

You know that when Lazarus was sick (as I think I have somewhere observed in another treatise) his sisters sent this news to our Saviour, saying, *Lord, behold, he whom thou lovest is sick*[b]. This was a very short letter, and their grief perhaps would not permit them to write a longer. But they did not fare the worse because they were not more ceremonious in their addresses: this alone did the business. O how great a power was there in these few words! They say no more to move him but only this, *Lord, thou lovest him;* and what doth not our Saviour do to show they were not mistaken? Up he rises; away he goes to the place of his abode; there needed no more prayers to bring him thither. And though there were many dangers in the way, as the story relates, though to go thither his disciples thought was to cast himself into a shower of stones[c], though the Jews, he knew very well, sought to take him and kill him[d]; yet love being as strong as death carried him through all impediments: he could not choose but go when he heard this charming word, *he whom thou lovest is sick.*

By which we may learn that to obtain the favour and grace, the help and assistance, the comfort and the presence of our blessed Saviour, we need no long petitions, no great address of

[a] John xiv. 21, 23. [b] xi. 3. [c] Ver. 8. [d] x. 39.

words, no courtship nor studied compliments. Let us be able only to tell him that he loves us, and it is enough. If we can but win his good affection, we need no more. We may then remember to him his own dear love more than ours. We may tell him how much good he hath done us, and that is argument sufficient to move him to do more.

We may relate his graciousness and sweet disposition, when we can perceive in our own hearts but disgusts at ourselves. We may say, O my Lord, I have seen by many arguments the wonderful great good will thou bearest to me. For thou hast instructed my ignorance, pitied my weaknesses, cured many of my diseases, delivered me from the power of temptations; I cannot tell what thou hast done for me, O most merciful Saviour, who art still going on, by innumerable ways, to testify thou lovest me. And this humble devout acknowledgment will certainly invite a further effusion of his favours. For it is a pleasure to him to do benefits, especially to those he loves. He rejoices over them to do them good. He loves to accomplish his own good purposes, and delights, as much as they can desire, to perfect what he hath happily begun in them. And therefore we may entreat him to give himself that pleasure, not to lose any of that joy which will so much please and rejoice us also, and make us his debtors, his admirers, his adorers, and lovers to all eternity.

We may desire him, even that it would please him to come again, according to his promise; because he loves us, and because he loves to finish his works of love: and we may be confident he will, and bring his rewards with him. Though he stay we think a great while (for certain reasons which he best knows) before he come, as he stayed two days after he heard of Lazarus his sickness, (notwithstanding the love he had for him, and his intentions to rescue him from death;) yet we ought not to be discouraged, if we be sure he loves us, but believe that he will appear at last, and that he will raise us up, though we lie dead in our graves, and have lain so perhaps many years, and that he will bid us come forth, and go along with him whither his endless love will lead us.

CHAP. XVIII.

A continuation of the former argument, concerning the mighty power of the divine love, and the benefit we have by loving our Lord's appearing.

HAVE we not great reason then to love him, and to *love his appearing,* since that will be the best argument of his love to us; and his love, you see, will prove such an assurance of all his blessings? What will move us, if this cannot do it? Need there any thing more be said to draw our affections towards him? If there do, then let me assure you that love will even transform us into him.

There is nothing more discernible in this passion, than that it assimilates us unto the thing or person which we love. Which should teach us indeed to have a great care what and whom we love, but should excite us to love him, our dearest Lord, without any measure; because nothing is so desirable as to be like to him, and nothing can prepare us so surely for his glorious appearing. "In that which every man loves, in that he lives," saith St. Austin[e] upon those words of the great apostle St. Paul, *not I live, but Christ liveth in me.* So great, so mighty a thing is true love, that it carries the heart from the place where it is, and translates it thither where it loves. If thou lovest thyself merely, then thou livest altogether in thyself: but if thy heart be set on any other person or thing, then thou livest in that which hath engaged thy affection: and if it be Jesus whom thou lovest in sincerity, it is certain that in him also thou livest.

Of so great importance it is that we love aright: for he that loves ill lives ill; and he that loves well cannot but live well too. But there is no danger at all in loving our Lord and his appearing: and therefore we need not stand to ask ourselves whether we should love him or no; or how much we shall love him; or with what passion and concernment we should set our hearts upon his coming again to take us into his glory. There is nothing to hinder us from loving here as much as ever we are able; no fear our affections should be too far engaged, as

[e] [In Gal. ii. 20. tom. iii. col. 950.]

they may be in other cases: all that caution is useless here, which, when we are in pursuit of lesser enjoyments, is but necessary to put a check upon our hearts, and cool a little our love towards them. The more we love him, the more we shall be like him; the more we love him, the more we shall live in him. This love makes us divine and heavenly; it purifies us, and makes us fit to live with him.

I must add also that, according to this rule, by *loving his appearing*, we shall be formed to some likeness of it; as much as we are capable here to be wrought and fashioned to an imitation of a thing so bright and full of glory. It will raise our minds, that is, to a noble pitch; and highly improve our degenerate nature. It will invite him to manifest himself to us, and graciously to shine upon us. It will possess us with a lively sense of him, and of the glory wherein he lives. The light of his countenance will be lifted up on our souls, and he will fill us with a stronger sense of life and immortality. It will chase away the base fear of death, and kill all vicious affections in us. We shall be purified and refined from all our dross by these holy fires. There is no sin will be able to live in the same place with this heavenly love; but will continually languish and decay, as this increases and grows stronger in our souls. Our spirits thereby will become more cheerful, light and aerial. They will ascend more easily towards those celestial places, and be less inclined, though they feel its attractions, toward this lower world. O what a coronet of glory will this love place beforehand on our head! It is itself a royal ornament, and a diadem of glory. It is a participation of a divine nature, an entrance upon the life of God, an heaven upon earth, a pleasure whereby we anticipate the joys of the other world: for if all love have a sweetness in it, this divine love sure cannot but entertain us with a transcendent satisfaction.

By this we have our conversation in heaven; and it is there only to be *ever with the Lord*, (as much as our condition here will give us leave;) for nothing but love will make him familiar to our thoughts, and present him frequently to the eye of our minds. Yea, this is the best glass we have, while we are here below, wherein to *see God*. If there be any way to know the meaning of those words, we must learn it of this teacher, which alone can discover to us so great a mystery. Nothing else can

lead us into that secresy, and reveal to us what lies hid in that retirement, *the vision of God.* Never hope for any key to open a door into the holy of holies, unless it be this of heavenly love. If it be possible to peep a little behind the veil, it is love only that enjoys so singular a privilege. For God, you see, is love; and the apostle tells us, that when faith and hope shall be done away, it is charity alone that still remains; as a thing of longer duration than this world, and whose proper place is heaven. This is one of the cherubims of glory, that inhabits the most holy place, and attends upon the Majesty on high. This is of an angelical nature, and is always there where God is. It waits upon him; it ministers to him; it knows its mind; it is privy to his thoughts and designs, and makes us understand more of him than all the wit in the world can do beside.

There is nothing can lend wings to the soul but only love: which raises us above this world, and sets us in the presence of him that made it. And what a sight doth it give us there of his boundless, bottomless goodness! If it can show us nothing else, it will not fail to let us see how gracious, how wonderfully gracious the Lord is. With what kindness doth love behold Almighty providence, spreading itself in tender mercy over all its works! It is this alone can make us feel how inclinable the Divine nature is to pour out its benefits. Nothing but love can make us know what an everlasting spring it is of grace and bounty, and with what unwearied kindness it delights to communicate its blessings to us. And what is there that we would see which is comparable to this? What can we desire to see but more of this, even when we are made perfect in love? And what thanks do we owe to God that we see so much! It ought to stir up all that is within us to bless his holy name. We ought to say, *Every day will I bless thee, and praise thy name for ever and ever.*

But for this also we must be beholden to love. For it is that which indites all our hymns, and meditates the divine praises. It puts the songs of joy into our mouth; and fills our hearts with thanksgiving. Our tongues are tied without this; or we do but babble, not speak, our Saviour's praises.

It is love that bursts out into such effusions as these:

O praise the Lord of love, who humbled himself to dwell among us. Praise him in the beauties of his holiness; praise him in his super-excellent wisdom. Let all his works praise him; who came to us with his hands full of miracles, and every miracle full of mercy. O praise him in his almighty and most merciful kindness; which made the lame to leap like a kid, and the tongue of the dumb to sing for joy; which opened the eyes of the blind to see his wonders, and the ears of the deaf to hear the wisdom whereby he spake; which restored the sick to health, and the dead to life; which published the gospel to the poor, and instructed the ignorant in the mysteries of the kingdom of God.

O praise him, before whom the devils fled, and confessed him to be the Lord. Praise him in his incomparable love; which thought it not enough to do all this, but also gave himself to die for us. Let all nations praise him, who are the purchase of his blood. Let them mark every step of his dying love; from the time he was betrayed and sold like a slave, till he finished his sufferings on the cross. O the greatness of that love, which endured such scorn, such reproach, such a bitter agony and shameful death, even for all those who have little sense of this wondrous love!

But let no Christian soul be insensible, how the hands which wrought so many miracles, and the feet which travelled up and down to do men good, were cruelly nailed by them to an ignominious gibbet. Let them remember how his head was crowned with thorns, and his body clothed in a fool's coat. How they spit in his face, blinded his eyes, and then rudely buffeted him to make them sport. O what love was that, which made him submit to be mocked and reviled, to be accounted worse than a seditious murderer, and numbered among the greatest transgressors! And above all, let it never be forgotten how he sweat in our service, as it had been drops of blood; and at last bled to death, after three hours' shame and anguish on the cross.

Praised be that incomparable charity. Praised be his inimitable meekness and humility. Let all the world extol and praise his lamb-like patience and innocence. Let them celebrate his admirable kindness in forgiving such implacable enemies; and his entire confidence and faith in God, whereby he offered up himself to him, and obtained an eternal redemption

for us. O the wonderful virtue of that sacrifice which hath taken away the sins of the world! Praised be the tender mercies of our God, which have forgiven us so many trespasses. Praised be his mercies, which have not only forgiven us, but restored us to life and glory again by the resurrection of Jesus from the dead.

Let us rejoice and be glad in that great salvation. Let us bless the God and Father of our Lord Jesus Christ, who according to his abundant mercy hath begotten us again unto a lively hope, by that resurrection of his from the dead. Let us lift up our heads and look to heaven our ancient country, for there he is exalted: and let us thank our God, who hath set him at his own right hand, and made him most glorious for ever.

See how all the angels welcomed him thither; and falling at his feet, most humbly worshipped his Majesty. See how they all now wait upon him, and constantly attend his pleasure. And let us worship him too with the devoutest and most lowly reverence. Let us praise him in his sanctuary; where he appears before God for us; from whence he sends down the gracious influences of his Spirit on us, and commands his angels to minister unto us. Let us praise him, the glorious King of angels and men: who hath conquered death, and triumphed over all the powers of darkness; and, opening the kingdom of heaven to all the faithful, hath promised that they shall reign in glory together with him.

Let all the angelical ministers praise him. Let the apostles, prophets and martyrs praise him. Let all those who are departed in the true faith and fear of him praise him. And let all the living, who partake of the daily fruit of his bounteous love, continually praise him. Let them praise the name of the Lord: for his name alone is excellent, his glory is above the earth and heaven.

Let them praise him in the greatness of his power, in the wisdom of his counsels, in the carefulness of his providence, in the riches, the exceeding riches of his grace, in the steadfastness of his word, and the faithfulness of all his promises. And let them all join together and beseech him to come again; that he may both accomplish our hopes and perfect his own praises.

O let him come that we may give him better praises, in one body for ever.

CHAP. XIX.

More expressions of this devout affection towards our Lord's appearing; and the way whereby we may excite them.

THIS is some of the language of love; which wishes every knee would bow to Jesus, and every tongue confess that he is the Lord; to the glory of God the Father, who hath thus highly exalted him. For its desires are unlimited; and its kindness, like the fountain of it, is inexhaustible and infinite. It is the brightest image of Jesus. There is nothing represents him so lively to the world. He now appears most in those who love most; and who long and wait with pure and ardent desires to see him come in all his glory. For they will *keep his commandment without spot, unrebukable until his appearing: which in his times he will show, who is the blessed and only Potentate, the King of kings, and Lord of lords, who only hath immortality, dwelling in the light which no man can approach unto, whom no man hath seen nor can see: to whom be honour and power everlasting. Amen.*

Why then, O my soul, do we not let this blessed guest be lodged in our heart? Or why do we not entertain it so that it may stay with us, and we may feel it stirring there in restless motions towards Jesus? What is the cause that we, who are made to love, should not let our love turn divine, and address it most devoutly to him who best deserves the love of all the world? Or what may it be that keeps us from running with the whole current of our affections towards that heavenly Lover, who sues so earnestly to us for our hearty love? Hath he not loved us enough to make us love him? Was he a cold and indifferent lover, that could not touch the heart with a sense of his kindness? Was he perfectly frozen and careless in our concerns, when the urgent wants of our souls called for his kind and compassionate relief? Or did he pretend a great deal of kindness, and make long protestations of his love, but did just nothing to merit our affection?

There need no answer to such questions; which serve only to reproach and confound our insensibleness and negligence; who have nothing to say why we do not love him. For so

apparent is his love, so confessedly great, so costly and expensive, so tender and obliging, that, as it had no example, nor can be ever exactly imitated, so it must needs attract all those and fill them with the greatest love, who do not turn away their eyes and their ears and their hearts from this Lord of love.

Let us but listen a while to him, and we shall hear him say, Was there any love like unto my love? What is it that you would have had me do for you more than I have done (without your desire), to win your love? Hath any man greater love than this, that he lay down his life for his friends? But what were you for whom I died? Herein God commended his love towards you, in that while you were yet sinners, I died for you. And what was the purchase I made by that price, which I laid down for you? Who is it that hath the keys of hell and death? To whom is all power given in heaven and in earth? Can any but I forgive your sins, and open to you the kingdom of heaven, and restore you to the joys of Paradise; nay, make you eat of the tree of life in the midst of the Paradise of God?

Where do you read of any king, who, at his coronation, gave such royal gifts to men? From whom do you expect the crown of righteousness, and an eternal inheritance, of which I gave the earnest so long ago? Can you think of any thing comparable to the glory of my appearing? Or is there any doubt whether I will come or no, or whether you shall appear with me in that celestial glory? What would you have me do to satisfy and assure you, more than I have already done; by my word, and by my blood, and by my angels, and by my Holy Spirit; which I have sent down from heaven to bear witness to me, and to tell you that I will certainly come again, and give you the kingdom prepared for you from the foundation of the world? Believe it. I will as surely come again, as I died, and rose from the dead, and visibly ascended into heaven, and, according to my promise, poured out the Holy Ghost upon my apostles, and inspired them to proclaim this in all tongues and languages; that I still live, and that because I live, you shall live also.

And is it possible for us to think we hear him speaking to us in this manner (as he doth in his blessed gospel), and not be provoked to summon all the powers of our soul to offer up

themselves in devout and hearty love to him? What hath the dearest friend, whom we love with so much passion, nay, even our tenderest parents, done for us, in comparison with this love? Or what can the favour of all the princes on earth (should they unite all their powers to love and honour us) bestow and heap upon us, worthy to be named together with this miraculous love? It ought to call us from all vain delights. Our minds should continually study to comprehend the breadth and length, the depth and height, and to know the love of Christ, which passeth knowledge. Our wills ought to be more passionately bent towards him, and grow every day stronger in his love. Our memories should be a most faithful treasury of the manifold tokens of his love. Our tongues and our hearts should never cease to meditate and sing the praises of his wondrous love.

For if we could speak to him, (as we may conceive him speaking to us,) and ask him what he did before the world, he would tell us that *he loved*. If we could ask him what moved his almighty wisdom to make the world, he would tell you that *he loved*. If we could further ask what he hath done ever since, he would still say, *he loved*. And what brought him down from heaven (if we could ask again) to be partaker of our miseries, he would tell you again that *he loved*. And could we ask again why he would humble himself so low as to take the form of a servant, and die a base, servile, and ignominious death, the death of the cross, he would again tell you that *he loved*. And if you could still go on to ask what moved him to send the Holy Ghost, and give such gifts to men, you would still receive the same answer, because *he loved*. And could you beseech him not to be angry, and you would inquire again what he hath been doing since those days, and what he now does, he would give you no new answer, but that *he loves*. And if you should pray him once more to tell you what he loves, he would let you know, it is nothing but *love, abundance of love*.

This is the thing he would win by his love. This is all that he asks and desires at our hands, though he hath obliged us so much. For this he solicits and beseeches, having set his heart upon it, as the fruit of his incomparable love. He intreats for this, as if it were for his life, that we would be at

last so sensible of all his kindness as to let him have our unfeigned love. For he, being love himself, loves nothing else but sincere and hearty love.

O blessed Jesus, should all our hearts then say, how much doth thy love differ from ours! Love brought thee down from heaven to us; but how few of us (and how slowly) doth it carry up thither unto thee! Love made thee die the most shameful death; but it doth not make us live the most glorious life. It made thee endure the sorest pains; but, alas! it doth not make mankind take the pleasure of following thy steps to the greatest happiness. It made thee think perpetually on such poor wretches as we are; but how seldom are our minds fixed, or how small is the number whom love inclines to think upon so glorious a person as thyself!

It persuaded thee to come to us when there was nothing to call thee but only our great miseries; but it doth not bring us all to thee, when we are moved by the merits and the precious promises of so great a love. Thy preaching was love; thy miracles were love; thy whole life was love; thy death was the most singular love; thy last breath, in a manner, was love; one of thy last words was love, even to thy bitterest enemies; thy sacraments are love; the Holy Ghost the Comforter is love; thy ambassadors were love; thou art, we see, *all love;* and yet, dull and stupid blocks that we are, we are nothing less than this divine love.

O sweet Saviour, what wilt thou do with such vile, such wretched hearts as these of ours? Canst thou endure so much as to look upon such souls as are so frozen before thy fires? Canst thou shed one beam more upon such icy hearts, that are so insensible of all thy flames? Is it possible that thou shouldst be so patient as to bear with the prayers of those whose breasts are so full of love, so propense to this affection, so free to pour it out to every thing, and yet allow so few or no drops of it unto thee, who deservest all the love we have?

O, dearest Lord, if there be any room still left in thy heart for such as we are, be pleased once more to cast thine eyes upon us most miserable sinners. If thou canst lend thine ears to the requests of such foolish, such obstinate hearts, as have been so senselessly deaf to all thy gracious intreaties, hear the

sighs and the groans of all those penitent souls who cry unto thee and say, Lord Jesus, look upon us. Spare us, good Lord, if it be but one dram of thy pity and tenderest compassion. O spare us but the least touch more from thine all-powerful hand, if thou art not weary of striking such rocky hearts as now petition thee for thy love. O mollify them, most gracious Lord, mollify them, we beseech thee, with thy dear love towards us. Now that they are a little tender and yielding to thee, melt and dissolve them into the like love towards thee. Enter into all our hearts; O that thou wouldst enter, and fill them with thy love! Overcome them with this powerful engine, thy mighty, thy wonderful love.

Thy love, I say, thy most stupendous love; for no word pleases me so much as love. Give me leave, therefore, to repeat it over again, and to pray thee by thy love, by thy dear and tender love, that thou wilt not pass by this heart of mine (among all the rest), which now at last would fain be replenished with thy love. I lie here in the humblest devotion prostrate at thy feet; and, gasping there before thee, my soul pants and says, O love, inspire me! O love, breathe thy soul and life into me! As thou hast overcome, so possess this heart entirely, and vouchsafe to dwell in me.

And do thou, my incomprehensibly loving Saviour, make me ever thus to sigh and groan, out of the very centre of mine heart, after thee. Make me always to be saying thus to thee; O my life, my joy, my hope, my all, do not despise this languishing soul, which entreats thee to dwell in it by thy surpassing love. Draw me after thee and touch me so that I may look upon nothing so much as thy love. Turn my heart about, and bend it wholly to thy love. Make me to speak of nothing with such delight as of thy love; to breathe nothing, to study nothing, to desire, to do nothing, but only love.

Let no day, at least, pass without some serious meditations of thy love. Let no sun shine but what shows me thee and thy love shining brighter by far upon me. Let no night close mine eyes, but do thou shut up a sense of thyself and thy love in my breast. Let no friend come to visit me, but give him thy love to bring along with him, and let him present thyself unto me. Let the sight of him enkindle thy love in me. Let the embraces of him knit me in faster affection to thee. Let

the remembrance of him and his kindness recal to mind thy infinitely greater love to me. Let every motion of my heart towards him rest at last in the love of thee, who art the hope and the satisfaction both of him and me.

Still may I therefore think of thee more frequently. Still may I desire thee more passionately. Still may I obey thee more universally. May the following acts of love and virtue still outstrip the former, and one conquest of myself make way for a nobler. May thine almighty love still grow and prevail, till there be no affection that dare appear, no passion that dare presume to show its head, against the sovereign power of thy love in mine heart.

And now, O my Lord, I know not how to leave thee until I hear thee say thou lovest me. Prostrate still will I here lie at thy feet; for I cannot have the heart to rise up again, unless thou wilt speak that kind, that gracious word, and tell me that thou dost not cease to love me. Nay, I die unless thou lovest me. I shall make my grave here, in this very place, and expire with these words in my mouth; LORD, WHETHER I LIVE OR DIE IT MATTERS NOT; LET ME BUT KNOW THAT THOU LOVEST ME.

And may I be so bold as to conclude thou hast some love to me, because I feel my heart beat thus passionately towards thee, and my soul thirsts and cries thus after thee? Will it not be too great a presumption to think thou hast not forsaken me, because I cannot forsake my request, but above all things long and labour to be beloved of thee? Is this love thou hast wrought in my heart to thee an encouragement to hope thou lovest me? Truly then, my Lord, I am well satisfied. Then I know thou bearest a favour to me. For my soul follows hard after thee; it cleaves unto thee; it loves thy memory, and delights itself in thy commandments.

It says continually, Nothing but more of thy love; nothing but abundance of thy love. I open my heart unto thy exuberant love. I expose myself to the power of thy transcendent love. I choose and desire the pleasures of thy love, above all the delights wherewith the world can entertain me; above the admired heaps of wealth, and the dazzling heights of honour; above the loudest praises of fame, and the bewitching applause of numerous spectators; above the charms of beauty, and the

more enticing delights of curious knowledge: nay, above the solid joys of health, and the most necessary refreshments of nature; above all that even thine own bounty can give to those that love thee.

O let me but love thee; make me but always thus to love thee, always despise all other delights compared with those of loving thee; do but fill my heart with that love and with those delights, and I am perfectly satisfied. I am at rest now I have given myself to thee entirely; and if I had a thousand hearts, they should be devoted to thy service with the most affectionate love to thee.

But yet, alas! when I think of thy wondrous love, I am apt to conclude again that I did amiss to say I was satisfied. All this, upon better thoughts, seems a great deal too little; and I am as short, methinks, of thy love, as if I loved thee not at all. For what have I given thee, when I have paid thee all my acknowledgments? What have I bestowed on thee, when I have given thee myself, and absolutely offered all my affections to thee? What is my heart, what are a thousand such hearts as this worth, that I should think such a present will be of any esteem with thee? If all my life were nothing else but the most affectionate, the most cheerful obedience to thee, what requital should I have made thee for all thy love to me?

Alas! I have so little ability to do any thing worthy of thee, that I have not the skill how to speak as becomes me of my duty to thee. What do I talk of acknowledgments to thee? that is as if I could number or value thy favours. And it is a worse absurdity to speak of giving thee my affections, (as if I were not a debtor to thee,) and of bestowing my heart on thee; for that is as if I had any thing I received not from thee. But it is worst of all (I am ashamed of it) to mention a requital of thy favours; for that is as if they were so small or so few as to admit of any return like a recompense unto thee.

No, no, I am nothing at all; I have nothing, I can do just nothing, but what is thine more than mine, if it be worth any thing. I here most solemnly protest that I think myself indebted to thee for all I have. I myself am thine; my love is thine; my prayers and desires are thine; my praises and thanksgivings are thine; so is my faith and my hope, my comforts and my joys, they are all thine. I cannot so much as

confess my debts and obligations, but it is from thee. I cannot be sensible of my faults, but I contract a new debt to thee. That I can so much as see and say I am nothing, I owe it unto thee.

What shall I do, therefore? how shall I express myself to thee? or in what manner shall I approach thee? All that I can think of is only this, still to cast down myself in the humblest devotion before thee, and, all thawed and dissolved with thy love, to pour out my heart unto thee, saying, LORD, WORK THINE OWN GOOD PLEASURE IN ME. Make me what thou thyself best likest and lovest; and when thou hast loved and obliged me as much as thou pleasest here, complete thine own benefits, and crown them with as great a glory as thine own great love can bestow hereafter.

CHAP. XX.

The Conclusion.

AND here I think it is best to put a period to this discourse, which is already come to a competent length. For where can I leave you better than in the arms of our Lord; entirely resolved into his will, and wishing to be united to him, and made one spirit with him, as much as he pleases? And yet how hard is it to cease to desire that happiness, in its utmost perfection! How can we choose but ask him leave, at least to repeat that wish over again? The very thoughts of it make the ravished soul thrust itself with the more ardent affection into the bosom of his love. They stir it up to ply him with new petitions, that he will draw it more strongly after him, and knit it more closely to him; that he will inspire it with more of his love, and, by perfecting his likeness in it, inseparably unite it to himself.

O blessed Jesus, surely thou wilt appear: I believe in due time thou wilt appear. I am fully persuaded thou wilt not fail to make good thy word, of coming to fetch us to thyself, and making us exceedingly more happy than now, in our most enlarged thoughts, we can conceive. I see, methinks, the sky cleave, and the day break, and the archangel, thy harbinger,

begin to look forth and thrust his head out of the clouds: which makes my heart leap for joy, as if it would leave this world, and instantly go to meet thee, my infinitely dearer Saviour.

For what splendour is there in gold, that I should desire it? what brightness in precious stones? what ornament in the most sumptuous apparel, compared with that good which our hope in thee supposes, and sets before us[a]? When thou who reignest over all creatures, shalt reveal thyself to mankind, sitting most magnificently upon a lofty throne; when innumerable millions of angels shall be seen about thee, and when the kingdom of heaven, which now is such a secret, shall be set wide open before all our eyes.

O let the thoughts of the trump of God, which shall then sound, awaken my soul more powerfully, to lift up itself to look for thee, and for that glorious sight thou wilt bless us withal at thy appearing! O let the faith that is in my heart grow daily more active, and work in me a most vigorous love of thee! And let my love be enlarged till this heart be stretched to its utmost capacity, and thou, the infinite Good, still fill and overflow it. For I am afraid thou shouldst come and find me unprepared for thee. I would not for all the world be found unready to meet thee, and unfit for the blessings thou wilt bring along with thee.

If an heart that desires thee most passionately be of any worth; if thou canst have any kind thoughts of a mind that prefers thee and thy love above all other things; if to love thine appearing far more than the most glorious condition wherein a man can possibly appear in mortal flesh, can find any grace in thine eyes; behold then a soul that is able to say, through thy great goodness, that it most earnestly longs for thee. See here an heart that desires to be like thee; that had rather die than displease thee; and that will welcome thy coming with more joy than a sick man, wearied with the restlessness of a long night, doth the morning light; or a traveller doth his much desired home; or a virgin espoused doth her long absent bridegroom, the dearly beloved of her soul.

[a] Greg. Nyssen. Orat. v. in Beatitud. [tom. i. p. 810 B.]

It is thou who hast begot in me these longings. I have received all thou seest in me from thy gracious hands, which have made me and fashioned me, and made me unsatisfied in any thing but thee and thy love. O let not these pious longings also be unsatisfied. Let me not want the pleasures from which I have turned mine eyes away here; and those pleasures too, which I look for so earnestly, and promise myself at thine appearing.

But let the same reason which moved thee to give me so much, incline thee to give me more. Let that mighty love which hath wrought in me desires, bring me to the enjoyment. And after thou hast pleased thy bounty, in making me receive as much as thou wilt in this present state, let it be thy pleasure to receive me to thee in a better; and by giving me all I would have, in the sight I expect of thee, to leave no desires remaining in me. Amen and Amen.

THE

HEART'S EASE;

OR,

A REMEDY AGAINST ALL TROUBLES.

WITH

A CONSOLATORY DISCOURSE

PARTICULARLY DIRECTED TO THOSE WHO HAVE LOST THEIR FRIENDS AND DEAR RELATIONS.

TO WHICH IS NOW ADDED,

TWO PAPERS PRINTED IN THE TIME OF THE LATE PLAGUE.

PSALM XCIV. 19.

In the multitude of my thoughts within me thy comforts delight my soul.

Ἐν ὀλιγίστοις κεῖται τὸ εὐδαιμόνως βιῶσαι.

'Happiness lies in a very few things.'

M. Antoninus. [De seipso, lib. vii. § 67.]

TO THE HONOURABLE

SIR WALTER ST. JOHN, BARONET,

AND

THE LADY ST. JOHN, HIS WIFE;

THE AUTHOR WISHETH ALL THE BLESSINGS OF THIS LIFE AND THAT WHICH IS TO COME.

The first occasion of these meditations upon those words of our Saviour to his disciples (John xiv. 1.) is known only to myself and another person whose contentment I exceedingly desired. But the occasion of their publication is known to more than yourselves, (for whose use they were first transcribed a good while ago,) which I will not trouble the world so much as to take an account of. For it will believe (it is like) that it comes from my own proper motion and inclination to send them abroad: and the ordinary reason from the importunity of friends can be understood by none but those who know that a friend can do more with us than we ourselves.

But the reason why they address themselves to you is known best to myself. For though you might know it if you pleased, yet your goodness teaches you to forget the many obligations you have laid upon me, which I ought always to remember. So many they are, that when I think how to discharge them, it puts me in mind that there is one sort of trouble which I have made no provision against in this treatise, which is for want of ability both to pay what we owe to those that love us, and also to express the sense which we have of their goodness. But I consider that this is such a pleasing sort of trouble, that one would not be willing that it should be cured. We have no reason to find fault that our friends will do us more good than we deserve, nor to complain that their goodness is greater than we can speak of. And that ought not (I know) to be

the occasion of my trouble, which is your singular pleasure and contentment. And if this kind of acknowledgment will acquit me in any sort of ingratitude, I am but beginning to discharge and exonerate myself: for I had designed, before the publishing of this was thought of, to put a treatise of another nature in your hands. But I am well secured that I shall not trouble you by beginning my addresses to you with a discourse of troubles, as if I did bode some evil to you, because I believe that you desire rather to be prepared against any crosses, than to have none befal you. I confess I discern some defects in the first part of this treatise, which if I had penned with an intention to have sent abroad, I think that I should have taken some care to have seen supplied. But it will not be the less acceptable to you, who are able, I know, out of the general truths here propounded, to raise such principles as will be able to give you satisfaction in particular cases not here named. Yet presuming that you will not be weary of reading any thing that comes from the hand of one whom you love so well, I shall here take the liberty to instance in some things which would have deserved some particular consideration.

There is no greater trouble to some ingenuous souls than to be requited with injuries for the kindnesses they have done to others: but they may soon consider that this befel our Master Jesus Christ himself. And though it be in their power to do good to others, yet it belongs not to them to make them good. And if there be any way to beget love in them, it is by love: and there is no small contentment in loving those who have no love for us. For this is the very height of love, and love itself is a thing so sweet that it is its own reward.

But some perhaps have this addition of trouble, that their own friends do not love them; and those whom God and nature do command to be kind, are ill-affected towards them. The same remedy will cure this disease. And let them turn their love into pity; that any should be so unhappy as to be strangers to the rarest pleasures in the world which arise from loving of others. And you may see from hence also the necessity of one rule which I have commended, which is, not to hope confidently for any thing here below. And particularly remember this, that you may be disappointed if you look for any more satisfaction from your children, than the pleasure of doing good to them, and seeing them do good to themselves. For the old saying hath had but few hitherto to cross it, that 'love (like your inheritances) doth descend, but useth not to ascend.'

But there are others that may say they could easily brook any suf-

ferings from others, but that commonly it is the lot of those that suffer to be thought guilty of those crimes for which they innocently suffer. *Quæ perferunt meruisse creduntur*[a]. The world is so sottish that they commonly 'think men deserve that which they endure;' and we are deprived many times not only of our enjoyments, but likewise of our fame; and are denied not only our security, but likewise all apology for ourselves. But who can keep the world from thinking what it pleaseth? Who knows not that it sees but with half an eye, if it be not stark blind? And what shall we be the better if men think well of us, seeing what they think either one way or other is with so little reason? If we deserve not well, their thoughts and speeches can do us no good; and if we do, God will take care that they shall do us no harm.

But there is a little number of good souls perhaps who are troubled for what others suffer, and are afflicted with the misery of their neighbours. There are so few that complain of this grief, and it is a malady that men are so seldom sick of, that I should scarce have thought it needful to have prescribed any physic for such a rare disease. If the hurt do not touch us in our bodies, relation or friends, we shall soon find comfort enough without any direction to alleviate the grief which we sustain for others, how heavy soever it may happen to be. But if any be oppressed with this sort of trouble, let them consider what is said in the ensuing treatise, that they do others no good, but themselves harm by being troubled. And therefore let them be sensible of their miseries so far only as to pray for them and relieve them, (if they can,) and to make their hearts sensible of God's mercies to themselves; and by that joy they may cure the other trouble.

But men are troubled perhaps that religion is like to suffer. I am very glad of it if they be, for then I suppose such persons are so much in love with religion that they will not let their trouble hinder any part of their duty. And if they do their duty, they may leave it to God to have a care of the interest of religion, for he loves it far better than we can do.

But some are troubled that they are no more troubled. A sad thing that we should be discontented at that for which we should be thankful! For by this trouble they mean nothing else but a confusedness of spirit which never did any body any good. The rubbing of the eyes doth not fetch out the mote, but makes them more red and angry; no more doth this distraction and fretting of

[a] [Boeth. de Consol. Philos. lib. i. pros. 4.]

the mind discharge it of any ill humours, but rather makes them more abound to vex us.

But some are yet troubled because they fall from the height of their resolution, and are more troubled now than once they were at what befalls them. Whereas they once observed these rules well, and kept themselves in peace, they fall now into some discontent again; whereas they did pray with some fervour, they now abate of the height of their zeal. Truly we must not expect, while we are here below in this cave or dungeon, to be quite free from all such damps. And it may be some degree of pride not to be able to endure some dulness and coldness of spirit. Be not troubled if at all times you cannot do as well as you would, but labour to do as well as you can. And especially take heed that the not doing of what you did do not breed in you a fearfulness that you shall never do as you were wont again. This dispirits the soul, and so disheartens it, that it runs itself into that very thing which it is taking a course to avoid.

Remember well that rule which is the first that you meet withal in the following book: Know your duty thoroughly, and then do it. If you think it to be less than it is, you will not do what you ought; and if you think it to be more than it is, you cannot do what you think you ought; and if you think that anxiety of mind for what is not in your present power is any part of your duty, you do not think as you ought. There was a great master[b] among the Jews who bid his scholars consider and tell him what was the best way wherein a man should always keep. One came and said that there was nothing better than a good eye; which is, in their language, a liberal and contented disposition; another said, a good companion is the best thing in the world; a third said, a good neighbour was the best thing he could desire; and the fourth preferred a man that could foresee things to come, i. e. a wise person. But at last came in one Eleazer, and he said, a good heart was better than them all. True, said the master, thou hast comprehended in two words all that the rest have said. For he that hath a good heart will be both contented, and a good companion, and a good neighbour, and easily see what is fit to be done by him. Let every man then seriously labour to find in himself a sincerity and uprightness of heart at all times, and that will save him abundance of other labour.

But let me take upon me to be so far a master as to tell you, that

[b] R. Jochanan in Pirke Avoth, cap. 2. [inter Opusc. Græc. Vet. Sent. et Moral. per J. C. Orellium, tom. ii. p. 458; et Apophthegm. Patr. Jud. lib. i. p. 317. ad calc. Vitæ Mosis, per Gaulmyn.]

next to this man the second said right, that a good friend is the greatest easement in the world in this sort of troubles.

If a man therefore cannot quiet himself, let him get a good friend to whom he may unbosom his heart; for *two* (saith Solomon[c]) *are better than one;* because if one fall, the other will lift up his fellow.

Two small streams united in one channel may be able to bear a vessel of some burden; and so may the counsels and comforts of two friends meeting together be able to support the weight of many troubles.

But if one will resolve to be troubled, I see there is no end of it; for a man may be disquieted in his thoughts about the choice of such a friend.

Let such consider this, that perhaps God hath given them one already, and the person that lies in their arms may give the best advice unto them. Or their spiritual guide may be the most excellent friend. Or howsoever they may know who will make one, by their love to piety, by the simplicity of their manners, the innocency and modesty of their converse, their wise discourse, their freedom from pride and captiousness, and such like things. This likewise I may add, that though there be an inequality between that person and you, which is a necessary thing to friendship, yet if other things be not wanting, love and friendship will make you equal.

But how if this friend should die, will some say, how much then shall I be troubled! And what remedy shall I use to give me comfort when I have lost him that should comfort me? I told you there was no end of questions. But yet the resolution of this question will satisfy all; for he that can bear this trouble will be able to support himself under all other. And therefore since I resolved to let those meditations go further than yourselves, I have composed a little tract to wait upon them, which administers comfort against the loss of friends. It hath indeed, contrary to my first design, outgrown that in bigness which was born above two years before it: but yet the reason may be because there is much of the other in it. For as it is in the calculations of our almanacs, which are referred exactly to some certain place, but fit without sensible error the whole nation; so I observe it is in this discourse, which, though it doth most properly belong to those who have lost their friends, yet hath many things in it which may indifferently serve all other persons who are troubled about worldly matters. And let me entreat you and all others that read me, to remember always that God rules the world; and that those things which are accidents to us are providences

[c] [Eccles. iv. 9.]

with him; and it will give you much satisfaction in your hearts. He hath made all these things mutable, and therefore it is a madness to think that they must always stand as we would have them: and yet he is so good, that he hath made something good for us in every mutation: so that it is a folly to be discontented that they continue not as we would have them. Who would go and seek for violets and primroses in the wood in the winter season? but then we may go and gather sticks to keep us warm. And in the spring who looks for grapes and plums and such ripe fruit? but yet we may prune the vines, and lop the trees, and wait awhile, and have what we desire. Assure yourselves it is forgetfulness of God that makes us troubled; yea, forgetfulness of ourselves also, who think we have lost our proper good, when we are well enough. And I think it will not unbecome me to speak to you in the words of a heathen [c], and bid you "Be confident, and looking up to heaven say, Hereafter I will use myself to what thou wilt; I conform my thoughts wholly unto thee; I refuse nothing that seems good in thine eyes. Lead me whither thou wilt; give me what garments thou pleasest; choose my food and provision for me, &c. I had always rather have that to be which already is, than any thing else; for I think that is better which God wills than that which I."

Which submissive address of his to God puts me in mind of some general rules laid down at the latter end of the first treatise [d], which it would have pleased you perhaps if they had been more enlarged. I shall take leave therefore to extend this preface a little further: that, if it be possible, I may not let you want any thing which you may chance to desire.

And, for direction of your prayers to God in these cases, be sure, first, to observe the cause of all your trouble, the fountain which casts forth the mire and dirt into your souls. When we know the cause of a malady, it is half cured. And seeing this cause you will find to be within yourselves: therefore, secondly, pray not so much against trouble, as the cause of the trouble. Pray for a contented mind, a low esteem of the world, a new opinion of things, an humble frame of heart, and such like graces. If we merely pray not to be troubled, and rest in general expressions, we shall find little ease to our hearts. Thirdly, pray not so much for removal of the thing that troubles you, as for strength to bear it, and divine power to

[c] Arrian. Epict. l. ii. cap. 16. l. iv. cap. 7. [pp. 217, 402.]

[d] [A lengthy extract from S. Chrysostom, which was inserted here in the first edition, was transferred by the author in the later editions to the following 'Consolatory discourse,' &c., where it will be found, sect. v.]

support you under it, and heavenly wisdom to make an advantage of it. Fourthly, if you do pray for the removal of any outward burden, and the prevention of any loss, yet let it be with an indifferent mind, lest you be more troubled when you find that God doth not hear those prayers. Fifthly, when you are troubled for one fault, be troubled for all, and pray for a new heart. When you have done any evil, then be humbled for the neglect of so much good, which may be the reason of that evil: for when a malady doth affect a particular part, the whole body must be purged; or else, if we apply the remedy only to that part, we shall but drive the humour to some other place. And, sixthly, I would wish you to apply the remedy presently, before the trouble eat into the flesh. As soon as you see it is come, fly to God, and take your antidotes, and beseech him to bless them to you. I cannot but here again transcribe another excellent speech of an heathen[e]:—"Either God can do something, or he cannot. If he can do nothing, why dost thou pray to him? If he can do something, why dost thou not pray that thou mayest not fear, nor desire, nor be sad for any of these things, rather than that this or that thing should be or not be to thee? If he can help us, then he can help us to be without a thing as well as to have it; and not to fear a thing as well as not to have it. Begin, therefore, to beg these things of God by prayer, and thou shalt see what will be the issue of it. One prays that he may have such an one to wife; do thou pray that thou mayest not desire her. Another prays to be eased of a tyranny; do thou pray that thou mayest be able to bear it. O let not my child die, saith another; but do thou say, O let me not fear the loss of it. Turn thy prayers, I say, all this way, and see what will come of it." Thus that royal philosopher.

And as for *faith*, which is another thing there mentioned, I entreat you to believe, first, that God is not hard to please. Persuade yourselves that he is good and gracious, and accepts of the sincere, hearty, and constant endeavours of his servants to do his will. Secondly, believe that he would have us pleased too, and delights in our contentment. It is not pleasing to him to see us troubled, nor doth he wish to see us full of perplexed thoughts; neither doth he willingly grieve us, or send such things upon us that should molest us; but he loves to have all his children in peace. And, thirdly, believe fully that he hath the greatest mind to give that which will remedy the greatest cause of troubles, and that is his

[e] M. Antonin. lib. ix. sect. 40. [p. 205.]

divine grace and Holy Spirit. Sin is that which makes all our sores so angry; the Spirit of the Most High is that which will enable us to mortify it; and this Spirit we may have as readily from him as a piece of bread from the hands of our dearest parents. Go on courageously, therefore, and be confident; seeing there is nothing that God is more desirous to bestow than that which will cure us of all our griefs.

Of these I shall say no more, and of the rest nothing at all, lest I should weary my other readers; though not you, who have given me abundant testimony that I can do nothing to displease you, and thereby laid a perpetual engagement upon me to be

The most affectionate

of those that love

and serve you,

SYMON PATRICK.

From your house at Battersea,
Oct. 4. 1659.

THE

HEART'S EASE;

OR,

A REMEDY AGAINST TROUBLE.

JOHN xiv. 1.

Let not your hearts be troubled . . . .

IT is not either fineness of wit, or abundance of wealth, or any such like inward or outward ornament, that makes the difference between men, and renders the one better than the other; but the firmness of good principles, the settledness of the spirit, and the quiet of the mind. To the obtaining of which all the old philosophers, many hundreds of years before our Saviour, did wisely summon all their forces; all whose lessons, when they are summed up, amount only to this, to teach a man how to be contented. Socrates was, upon this score, accounted the best amongst them, because, though he understood but a little of the frame of nature, yet he well understood himself; and perceived that he was not the wisest man that could read rare things in the stars, and could follow the paths of the sun, and trace all the heavenly bodies in the course which they run, but he that could tell how not to be troubled, either for the want of that knowledge or for any other thing.

Christianity hath not a new design in hand, but more rare and excellent instruments to effect the old. What heathens could speak of, it enables us to do: and still it is as true as ever it was, that nothing betters a man's condition, but that which rids him of all his griefs and eases him of his troubles. So a

great divine among the ancients observes, that Christians are not distinguished from others σχήμασι καὶ τύποις ἐξωτέροις[a], 'by outward fashions and modes,' by their external forms and moulds into which they are cast; or by professing a body of notions differing from others in the world; but by the renewing of their minds, by the peaceableness of their thoughts, by charity and heavenly love, &c. And if we behold in their minds, as in other men's, 'great shakings or earthquakes, unsettled thoughts and reasonings, unbelief, confusedness, trouble, trembling, fearfulness[b],' (all these words he uses,) they are fast bound to worldly things, they have not attained the end of their Christianity, and are but a little bettered by their new condition.

That Christ came to discharge the mind of those troublesome guests, the text (and many other verses of the ensuing chapters) plainly tells us: the sense of which is this, Do but believe that I am from God, and that what I say is his mind, and you need not be troubled. The faith of Christ is an antidote against all evil: peace is the proper result of the Christian temper. It is the great kindness which our religion doth us, that it brings us to a settledness of mind and a consistency within ourselves.

Our Saviour, when he spake these words, was just going to leave his little flock; and you must needs think that his patients, who were yet under his cure, could not but take the news of his departure very heavily: therefore, as a wise and tender physician, he prescribes them the best directions that he could, and leaves them in their hands, assuring them that every precept of his was a sovereign medicine, every promise of his a cordial to relieve their fainting spirits; and particularly telling them that he would send the Comforter, and that they should be under the regiment and care of the Holy Ghost. These heavenly recipes they have transcribed and transmitted unto all succeeding ages, so that over the Gospel we may write what the Egyptians did over their library, τὸ τῶν ψυχῶν ἰατρεῖον[c],

[a] Macarius, Homil. 5. Τῇ τοῦ νοὸς ἀνακαινίσει, καὶ τῇ τῶν λογισμῶν εἰρήνῃ, καὶ τῇ τοῦ Κυρίου ἀγάπῃ, καὶ οὐρανίῳ ἔρωτι, &c. [§ 5. Galland. Biblioth. Patr. Græc. tom. vii. p. 23.]

[b] Σεισμὸν καὶ ἀκαταστασίαν τῶν λογισμῶν, καὶ ἀπιστίαν καὶ σύγχυσιν, καὶ ταραχὴν καὶ δειλίαν. [§ 4. ibid.]

[c] [Diod. Sic. i. 49.]

'this is the hospital for sick souls.' After all our search something will trouble us, unless we have recourse hither; or if nothing do, our case is so much the worse; and that which now would be only trouble, will hereafter be *tribulation and anguish.*

That which I intend for the subject of my discourse is this, that A CHRISTIAN HEART OUGHT NOT TO BE TROUBLED; or, that IT DOTH NOT BECOME A FAITHFUL SOUL TO ADMIT OF ANY DISQUIET IN IT.

By trouble I understand that tumultuous disorder in the soul which arises from the prevalency of these passions; fear, carefulness, sorrow, anger, and the rest of their kindred; which have evil for their object. These passions are raised either from something within us or from something without us: our Saviour chiefly speaks of the latter, and so shall I also; yet so as to have some regard to the former, that so I may, in all particulars, leave the mind well satisfied. That I may not spend so much time in other things, as to have none remaining for that which I mainly intend, I shall not tie myself to the laws of an exact method, but make my discourse consist only of these two general parts:—

1. Of some Reasons why a Christian should not be troubled.
2. Of some Rules to keep our hearts from trouble.

CHAP. I.

Two reasons against trouble, drawn from Christ's promises and God's providence.

I. FOR the former, let us consider, that TROUBLE IS A GREAT DISPARAGEMENT TO THE PROMISES OF THE GOSPEL, which give us ease in every case, unless we refuse to become God's patients, and will not use his remedies. In the case of sin's prevalency, it saith, *Sin shall not have dominion over you*[d], &c.; *The law of the spirit of life in Christ Jesus hath made me free*[e], &c.; *If any man sin, we have an Advocate with the Father*[f], &c.: which supports our spirits under the thoughts both of

[d] Rom. vi. 14. [e] viii. 2, 3, 11. [f] 1 John 1, 2.

what we have admitted and what we fear we shall admit. To the poor man and the persecuted it saith, *Let your conversation be without covetousness*, &c.: *So that we may boldly say, The Lord is my helper*, and *I will not fear*[g], &c.; and, *Seek you first the kingdom of God*[h], &c. *Blessed are you when you are persecuted*[i], &c. And (that I may not enumerate all particulars) it saith to every Christian, whatsoever condition he be in, *Be careful for nothing, but in every thing by prayer*, &c. *And the peace of God which passeth all understanding*[k], &c.

When we sit down, therefore, desponding either under the power or the guilt of our sins, and think that they can never be forgiven or never overcome, when we murmur or are dejected because we are mean, despised, and afflicted, when we are impatient for the loss of our friends, or our goods, &c., we do only betray our own ignorance, or unbelief, or idleness: we either know not what the gospel speaks, or we do not believe it, or we resolve not to be the better for it if it will put us to any labour: either we or the gospel must bear the blame of our trouble and disquiet; either that cannot relieve us, or we do ill to behave ourselves as though it could not. I know every good Christian will accuse himself. Not that; but let him consider that he cannot do it nor his Saviour honour, but by ceasing his discontents; for others will think that he is no better physician than the rest who hath no better success in his cures.

II. IT IS A GREAT DISPARAGEMENT TO THE PROVIDENCE OF GOD WHICH RULES THE WORLD. If there were no Providence, I confess we were destitute of the greatest reason that man hath against fears, and cares, and sorrows; and he that is troubled would be less unreasonable, because all the care would lie upon himself, and his own shoulders must alone bear the burden of every accident. But seeing we acknowledge an eternal wisdom, an infinite, unprejudiced understanding, that governs and superintends in all affairs, it is the greatest folly to be disquieted, and to deport ourselves as if we and chance ruled all. Some have satisfied themselves with this single thought, that it is in vain to be troubled, since things must not be as we will,

[g] Heb. xiii. 5, 6. [h] Matt. vi. 33. [i] Matt. v. 10–12.
[k] Phil. iv. 6, 7.

but as that Almighty Being pleases. A cold comfort, one would think, to be content upon necessity; and yet this some heathens have mainly insisted upon as their support. Thanks be to God that we have something better for to quiet us, and that is this, that the world is governed not merely by God's will, but by his wisdom. He disposeth all things according to his pleasure, but it pleaseth him to do all things for the best. He rules the world not as an absolute Lord, so that we should be sensible only of his power, but as a loving Father, so that we should be confident of his goodness. And therefore his children should not be displeased as if they were none of his family, nor within the verge of his care, and were wholly forgotten by him; but they should comfort themselves that they are in such safe hands, who will do nothing but with the greatest reason and for the most excellent ends. Τὰ τῶν θεῶν προνοίας μεστά, was a pithy saying of one of the better sorts of heathens[1]: 'all God's actions are full of providence;' and therefore there is no reason that we should be displeased as if God did not do well or we could do better. You would think it strange if the flocks and herds should make a mutiny because their shepherd chooses their pasture for them, and will not let them wander into wild deserts and barren places, nor stray one from another they know not whither, nor run in rank meadows and fat grounds that may breed a rot among them; and yet such a thing is our trouble and vexation, because we cannot do as we list, or are not as we would choose. It is a fond desire to have the rod and the staff out of the hand of the Shepherd of Israel; and then we might soon walk into dangerous paths, and when we had brought ourselves into the valley of the shadow of death, find none at all to afford us any comfort.

It is distrust of God to be troubled about what is to come, impatience against God to be troubled for what is present, and anger at him to be troubled for what is past. This temper of spirit finds fault with his wisdom, and blames his goodness, and depresses his power, and reprehends his faithfulness in the dispose of things; and therefore it is a sin, and speedily to be amended.

To be troubled, speaks as if God had provided better for the

[1] Antonin. l. ii. sect. 3. [p. 22.]

beasts than for mankind; for they live in peace within themselves, and we hear not of their murmurs and complaints. And by the same reason that thou art troubled, all the men in the world may be vexed also; and so none think or speak well of God, but behave themselves as if he cared not for his rational creatures. For thou mayest consider that God hath endowed thee with an understanding of such a size, with abilities and capacities of such a proportion, and measured for thee such a fortune and condition as now thou hast: if thou art not contented, but frettest within thyself that thou art not better, then so may another man, for he wants something also; yea, so may all men, for they are all imperfect. And upon the same grounds that thou art troubled for the want of one particular thing, thou mayest at the next step be troubled that thou art not a king, or that thou art not an angel; and an angel may also be troubled that he is not a principality, or one of the seven spirits that stand at the throne of God: and one of those may take it ill that he was not made to understand more; and so the best things would be most miserable, because they understand best their own wants. Many arguments to this purpose might be heaped up from the consideration of God's providence, but I shall only mention one more.

God's providence hath so ordered the several degrees of things in the world, that none of them should be troubled, but should mutually help and be assistant unto each other in their several wants; and so there is not the greatest man living but stands in need of the meanest, as much as the meanest doth of him; just as none of us can live without the beasts, no more than many of them can live without us.

What things we want God hath otherwise supplied us with, either in some other kind, or else in the same by some other help. Which is an observation that we are so well acquainted withal, that we are not discontented because we need clothes, and were born naked into the world; nor do we account the beasts have a privilege above us, because they come well clad into being, and provided with apparel for all their lives, or are armed with horns and hoofs; for God hath given unto us reason, which is a better thing, and hath made them both to clothe and to arm us. Now so it is in other cases: as God hath made the brutes to help us in lesser things, so hath he

made other men to relieve our greater necessities, to comfort us in our sadnesses, to supply us in our wants, to advise us in our straits, and to be eyes and hands unto us, if we have no wisdom nor strength of our own; yea, his own Son hath he given to make an universal provision for us. Now when we ask and resolve ourselves, Which is better, to come into the world with clothes on our backs, or to have reason? we should ascend up a little higher in our thoughts, and put to ourselves a parallel case: Which is best, to have all in thy own hands and sole disposal, or to have a supreme Providence, an infinite wisdom to govern all thy affairs? When we find the difference between these two, let us not live as if God ruled not at all, or if it were better that we did rule than he.

CHAP. II.

Three other reasons, which show that we may be good whatsoever comes, and we may turn it into good; and if we do not, it will be a double evil.

III. We should not be troubled, because WE MAY BE GOOD IN EVERY CONDITION. What should he fear who may always be what he should be? What need he be vexed who need not be miserable unless he will? What cause hath he to be displeased who may always please God and himself too? The philosophers used to comfort themselves with this: The tyrant may kill me, but he cannot hurt me; he may make me suffer torments, but he cannot make me do a dishonest action. I may be poor, but still I may be just, and I may be contented. I may be ill spoken of, but still I can do well. I may be sick, but still I may be patient. I may be in prison, but there I may pray and sing as Paul and Silas did. That which cannot hinder our duty should not be so sadly lamented; or, (as the noble philosopher and emperor speaks [m],) "How should that make the life of man worse, which doth not make worse the man himself?" If we can do what becomes us both to God

[m] Ὁ δὲ χείρω μὴ ποιεῖ ἄνθρωπον, πῶς ἂν τοῦτο βίον ἀνθρώπου χείρω ποιήσειεν;—M. Anton. lib. ii. sect. 11. [p. 27.]

and men, why should we be disturbed at what men do unto us? If they should take away our lives, they cannot take away our religion: we may be holy, when they will not let us be in the world. Yea, there are some particular virtues to be exercised in a suffering condition, which else we might not have had occasion for; and so we have no reason to be angry if they have done us a courtesy, and make us better than we should have been, when they intended to have made us worse. And that is the fourth thing which I desire may be considered.

IV. We may make an advantage of every accident: according to that of the apostle, *All things shall work together for good to those that love God*[n]; viz. by our prudence and observation, and taking those occasions which are offered us, and God's grace assisting us. It is not in our power always to be in health, or to be rich, &c. but when sickness or poverty comes, we can make a good use of it, and turn it into health and riches other ways. "The life of man (saith Plato[o]) is like to a game at tables, wherein two things are considerable; the one within our power, and the other without; the chance is not in us, but to play it well is. When we cannot have a good cast, it remains that by our skill and art we make a bad one good. What shall fall out is not within us to choose; but to manage and improve that which happens, and turn it to our advantage, by the goodness and grace of God, is within ourselves, and nothing that is without us can intermeddle, or be an impediment to us in it[p]." Zeno, I remember, having lost all his goods by shipwreck, sought for no port but Athens, and betook himself from merchandize to the study of philosophy; and so he revenged himself on fortune (as he called it) by becoming a scholar and an honest man, crying out, "Now I made a good voyage when I lost all[q]." Such a story Nicephorus[r] tells us of one Cyrus a courtier in the time of Theodosius the

[n] Rom. viii. 28.

[o] Κυβεία γὰρ ὁ Πλάτων τὸν βίον ἀπείκασεν, &c. Plutarch. de Tranquil. [p. 467.]

[p] Si illud quod est maxime opus jactu non cadit,
Illud quod cecidit forte, id arte ut corrigas.
Teren. [Adelph. Act. iv. sc. 7. 21.]

[q] Jam bene navigavi, cum naufragium feci. [Diog. Laert. vii. 4. § 5. cf. Plut. de Profect. Virt. Sent. p. 86, de Tranq. An. p. 467; Sen. de Tranq. An. cap. 14. § 2.]

[r] [Hist. Eccles. lib. xiv. cap. 66. tom. ii. p. 545 A.]

younger, who through the envious accusations of some favourites being spoiled of his goods, of a pagan he became a Christian, and of a Christian a priest of God, and at last attained the degree of a bishop. So true is that which a holy father said[s], "Danger is better than safety, and a storm more eligible than a perpetual calm, if before our fears we were the world's, but after them we became God's." Which puts me in mind of an admirable prayer, or thanksgiving rather, of Philagrius, who hearing the same father expound to him the seventy-third Psalm as he lay under a sore sickness, lift up his hands to heaven, and turning his eyes eastward, said, "I thank thee, O Father, the Creator of thy mankind[t], that thou dost us good against our wills, and purifiest our inward man by the outward. I thank thee that thou conductest us by cross and contrary ways to a blessed end, according to such reasons as are known to thyself."

There is reason then we should be of good cheer, since things are as we please to make them. We need not be troubled, since what befals us to our cross may serve a better end than that which we pursued; and the sighs and groans which our affliction extorted be converted into the joyful sound of praise to God. If we be made better men, more holy and severe in our lives, more certain of heaven, and more desirous to be there; if we learn to know the world better, to place less confidence in it, and to expect nothing from it; then there is no reason that we should accuse our fortune.

For who is a loser that parts with a friend, and gets God for his father, and commits himself to his providence? that loses a husband or a wife, and dwells for ever after in the arms of God, and is inflamed with a greater love of heavenly things? The world perhaps doth not love us: have we not reason to thank it, if it makes us to place our comfort and contentment in God and a pure conscience? Or they are unkind whom we have most obliged: but we repent not that we have done such ungrateful persons good; we still love them, and lay up hereafter our hopes and expectation above, and then when we cast up our accounts, we find that we are gainers by them.

[s] *Κρείττων ἀσφαλείας κίνδυνος*, &c. Greg. Naz. Epist. 19. ad Cæsar. Fratrem. [ed. Ben. Epist. 20. tom. ii. p. 20 A.]

[t] *Ποιητὰ τῶν σῶν ἀνθρώπων*, Epist. 66. [ed. Ben. Epist. 34. p. 31 B.]

Thus in all cases we may say as he did, "O happy Providence, my good Master, that teaches me better than I could do myself[u];" who not only invites me, but compels me unto virtue! Now I am well, because I was ill; I have lost one thing, and gained many, God, virtue, and myself; I have not what I desired, but I have what I ought to have desired. Another hath done for me that which I should have done myself.

V. TROUBLE MAKES EVERY SAD ACCIDENT A DOUBLE EVIL, AND CONTENTEDNESS MAKES IT NONE AT ALL. If we will, it can do us no harm; if we give way to it, we also wound ourselves, and join with it to make ourselves miserable. There is a perfect emblem of our folly in the story of a simple rustic, who going home out of the field, laid the plough upon the ass's back, and then got up himself also; and observing the poor beast to be oppressed, could find no better way to ease her, but by laying the plough upon his own shoulder; so loading himself, and not at all easing her of her burden.

Our bodies are compared by the ancients to the beast[w]; the mind they call the man, the soul is ourself. When the body is oppressed with many miseries, by cares and grief we think to ease it; whereas, alas, we take not the loads off from it, but only lay them upon ourselves. The same burden remains upon the poor beast, and the man also bears it upon his back. Like a bird in the lime-twigs, the more we flutter, the more we are entangled; and that which was but a single mischief before, by our own follies becomes two, or a great many. But if we stir not at all, but be quiet and still, then we are what we were before this evil came; only our souls have the addition of the greatest joy and pleasure by the victory we have obtained. For it hath no small effect upon our souls, that we can be joyful when there is matter of sorrow, and that we can overcome the world, and depend upon nothing for our happiness but God and our own souls. Let us not sin then against reason, as well as God providence and religion: nor make ourselves more miserable than we need be. When we lose our estates, let us not lose our constancy and our cheerfulness too; if thou hast lost

[u] *Εὖγ' ὦ τύχη, μοὶ τῶν καλῶν διδάσκαλε.* [Zeno, ubi supra.]
[w] *Τὸ θηρίον ἐν ἡμῖν.*

thy health, do not lose thy patience also; if thou must die a little sooner than thou thoughtest, do not die unwillingly; if thou hast no friend, be not also thine own enemy; if others vex thee, do not withal vex thyself; if thou be ill to-day, be not also solicitous for to-morrow: *sufficient for the day is the evil thereof*[x]. Which are almost the very words of Ben Syra, who gives this reason against such vexatious thoughts;—Perhaps to-morrow shall not be, and so thou afflictest thyself for that which nothing belongs to thee: we multiply our evils by our trouble, and bring those upon ourselves which perhaps were never intended for our portion. But our quietness disappoints the enemy, and will weary him in his assaults, when he sees that we do but grow better by what befals us, and turn it into victory and triumph. So a wise man once said, "No man ever reproached me more than once; for by patient bearing his reproaches the first time, I taught him to abstain the second."

CHAP. III.

Some other reasons from the kindness that may be intended us in every thing, from the nature of the world, and the nature of virtue.

VI. BE NOT TROUBLED AT THAT WHICH MAY BE SENT TO BREED THE GREATEST JOY. Not to speak of spiritual joys, which all troublesome things do breed in holy men, by making them more holy, (according as the apostle saith[y],) many sad accidents in men's account have proved the greatest means of temporal advantage, and ended in their outward prosperity. You know how it fared with Joseph, and that the chains of iron upon his legs were the occasion of the chain of gold about his neck; his prison was the way to a throne. And, (as St. James speaks[z],) *you have heard of the patience of Job, and have seen the end of the Lord, that the Lord is very pitiful and of tender mercy.* And church history tells us, that Eudoxia[a], the

[x] Matt. vi. ult.
[y] Heb. xii. 11.
[z] James v. 11.
[a] [Or Eudocia, the names being often confounded; the daughter of the sophist Leontius. Her history, with the authorities, is given by Gibbon, chap. 32. vol. iii. p. 196.]

daughter of a philosopher in Athens, being cast out of her father's house by her unkind brethren, and coming to Constantinople to beseech Theodosius junior the emperor that he would right a poor orphan, found such favour in his eyes, that he made her his queen, and she got a palace who sought but for a house. So true is that which the heathen observed, "wrong ofttimes makes way for a better fortune[b]." A fever (Hippocrates observes) puts an end to some diseases, and delivers those from death who could no other way be cured; and so Cardan tells us[c], that an imprisonment which once befel him, which he looked upon as the greatest disgrace, did him at length the greatest honour, and so wiped off all reproaches from his name, *ut nec suspicionis vestigium emicuerit*[d], 'that there was not the least footstep left of any suspicion.' The same author (who had as many strange and unusual accidents in his life as ever any man I read or heard of) tells us elsewhere this notable observation which he made[e]; 'It is fatal to me, that all good which befals me begins in some evil.' Consider then, that what happens to one, yea to many, may happen to thee: why shouldst thou be troubled, till thou knowest whether thou hast reason to be troubled or no? Wait, stay a while, thou canst but be troubled at the last: and perhaps thou shalt have reason to rejoice both for that evil, and for that thou wast not troubled. The conclusion of a matter is most to be regarded, and we can know little in the beginning.

Moses's rod was a serpent till he took it by the tail, and then it became what it was before: and if we would lay hold on things only by their end, we should find many things, that seem terrible and noxious, to be benign and salutiferous. *Finis rerum caput est*, as one wittily said: begin therefore at the end, judge nothing, but hope well till thou seest the conclusion. Why shouldst thou not entertain thyself with good hopes now, as well as at another time? Why wilt thou keep up and maintain the old piece of folly, to hope for much, when thou need hope for nothing; and to hope for nothing, when thou hast nothing to live upon but hopes? I mean to be big with

[b] Majori sæpe fortunæ locum fecit injuria,—Sen. [Vid. de Ira, ii. 27.]

[c] In Aphoris. [tom. iii. p. 755.]

[d] L. de Vita Propria, cap. 33. [tom. i. p. 26.]

[e] Fatale mihi est omne bonum ex malo initium habere,—Card. de Libris Propriis. [tom. i. p. 94.]

expectation in prosperity, when thou hast enough in present possession; and to be as full of despair in adversity, when expectation is all thou hast left.

It is our grand fault, that we are affected presently according as every thing appears in the face, and we stay not till it turn about and show us the other side. So the pleasures of sin deceive us, which come on with a beauteous countenance and smiling looks, with a painted face and flattering words, but go off again with blushing and shame, with pain and sorrow, and all the ugliness appears when they have but turned their backs upon us. And so the cross accidents of the world do dismay us in such like manner, which come upon us with a sad and cloudy look, but have a bright side behind; and if we would but be patient till the shower or storm be over, we might behold the face of the sun breaking forth upon us.

But you will say, What if the black night do continue, and events do not answer my expectation?

I answer; you will be glad that you have not been troubled, and have kept yourselves in comfort by good hopes for so long a time, wherein else you must have lived in trouble. But then I say further, that if hope of better things in this world can do so much to support a man so long, the hopes of incomparably better things in heaven, you may easily consider, will make you never to be troubled to your lives' end. Cardan tells us[f] that he used to cure little griefs by play and sports, and great ones by false hopes and excogitations: if but imaginary and invented hopes were found by him to be of some efficacy, we cannot reasonably doubt but those which are real and certain will be of far greater and far longer force. Let us not therefore be troubled, seeing there may be cause (if we knew all) to rejoice.

To these reasons may be added many others, which even heathens have lit upon. As,

VII. We should not be troubled at what is natural. Now our body is a part of the world, and it is natural to it to feel the mutations and changes that are in that thing of which it is a part; and if one member suffer, at least those which are next to it will suffer likewise; and man hath no reason to

[f] De Vit. Prop. c. 52. [tom. i. p. 52.]

repine that he fares as other pieces of this great body do. Antoninus calls him that takes in ill part what here befals him "an imposthume and tumour, as it were, of the world[g]," one that hath made an abscession and departure from the whole, like a bag of suppurated blood, that feels nothing, and hath no communion with the body.

VIII. NOR SHOULD WE BE TROUBLED, say they, AT WHAT IS PROFITABLE. There is nothing happens but what conduces some way or other to the good of the world, or is of advantage to some part of it, though not to thee. Many changes are necessary to the natural preservation of things; as, thy friends must die, else there would not be room for others that are coming into being, and the world would be too little for its inhabitants: others to the preservation of civil government; and others for the correction and amendment of men's manners. And as in all changes of the seasons of the year we see thereby that fruits and the rest of things are the better provided for; so they suppose that every other alteration that is in any part of nature tends to the preservation and continuance of it some way or other[h].

IX. IT IS IN VAIN likewise (as I touched before), in their opinion, TO BE TROUBLED; AND PATIENCE IS HIS REMEDY WHO HATH NO REMEDY ELSE[i].

X. It is also to be considered, that IT IS NO GREAT PROOF OF VIRTUE NOT TO TROUBLE OTHERS; BUT THIS IS EXCELLENT, QUIETLY TO BEAR THE TROUBLE THEY GIVE TO US.

CHAP. IV.

Where we must lay our foundation of settlement, and how it must be laid.

THESE and such like arguments I shall dismiss, and proceed rather unto the second general part of my discourse which I propounded;—

THE RULES WE SHOULD OBSERVE TO PRESERVE US FROM TROUBLE; which I shall lay down after I have premised these two things:

[g] Ἀπόστημα καὶ οἷον φύμα τοῦ κόσμου.—lib. ii. sect. 16. [p. 31.]

[h] Ἐκείνης ἐστὶ σωστικόν. [ibid. § 3. p. 22.]

[i] Consilium ejus est, qui nullum habet consilium.

1. Let us seek for them in their right place, where they are to be found. And then,

2. Let us firmly settle ourselves upon such principles, else we shall always be shaking.

For the first, that we may find out the truest rules for the obtaining peace and quiet, let us resolve, that evil is not so much in things as in ourselves; and if the evil which disquiets us be not in outward things, neither is the good which must give us rest to be found in them. All unquietness arises from the mind; and a plaister applied to the stomach will as soon cure a wounded conscience, as riches, or any thing in the world, heal a discontented mind. All the earthquakes and shakings are begot within our own bowels, and proceed not from the winds which blow without. This therefore is the first thing we must do, get acquaintance with our own hearts, and see the cause of all our grief; for nothing will heal us without ourselves. Our Saviour seems to intimate this truth to us in that phrase in the Gospel[k], ἐτάραξεν ἑαυτὸν, 'he troubled himself' (as the margent hath it), which some think signifies the perfection of our Saviour, that nothing could trouble him; but it also shows whence properly trouble arises, viz. from the motion of man's own spirit: which our Saviour could compose; but now he groaned, even to the troubling and disturbing of himself. For want of this easy observation it is that men labour for peace at endless expenses both of pains, money, and time, yet never purchase it. Some seek for it in company and cheerful society, which they think can put away the melancholy; but still they mind not that they carry the disease about them, which cannot so be cured. Others seek for it in a contrary way of a solitary life, by quitting the affairs of the world, and retiring from all company into a closet; but all this while they retire not from themselves, and the evil spirit which is in them is not yet cast out: so while they thought they had ended their trouble, they did but change it; while they shake off all, they are disquieted, because they have not shaken off themselves. Their own foolish opinions, appetites, passions, and desires remain unmortified; and though they should never see man, they will have vexation enough from these. Others seek for

[k] John xi. 33.

it in travel and seeing foreign parts; but this will not effect the business neither, as long as they have themselves in company. Motion will but stir and enrage the humour, and make it more turbulent and unquiet. Others leave off some evil practices which they find to disturb them; but as long as the body of sin is remaining, they are not settled. They are like the dog who breaks his chain, but a great part of it still he trails after him[1]. They retain their ancient love and affection, and so are the same men, though they do not the same things. And, as some one I remember saith, he that retires out of the world, and thinks thereby to be at peace, but yet desires the fame or the glory of the world, or any thing else that is in it, he hath only his arms and his legs out of it; his heart and his mind is still in it. Here therefore we must begin (as I said), in the mortification of ourselves. If we be not quieted within, every thing in the world will make us miserable; if we be, then nothing can harm us. If our false opinions, unreasonable desires, fond affections, ungrounded hope, &c. be alive, we are no longer quiet than the world pleaseth. Our peace is at the mercy of every report, of every man's mouth, and all the several accidents of evil that are in the world. If we be sick, and are afraid to die; if we be in pain, and have no patience; if we be scorned, and are proud; if we be lessened in our estates, and are covetous, &c.; then nothing can help us from being miserable. But, on the contrary, if we do not fear death so much as an ill life; if we think impatience and murmuring a worse disease than the gout; if we think pride to be the greatest reproach and the highest disgrace, and take covetousness to be the greatest beggary and basest poverty; there is no harm a man can feel by death, or sickness, or scorn, or want. When all the alterations in the world will not quiet us, one alteration will, and that is the change of our opinions concerning things, and our estimate of them: by this one more will be done than by ten thousand changes. The heathen could say, that no man can make another a slave, unless he hath first enslaved himself[m]. Be not enthralled to pleasure or

[1] Nam et luctata canis nodum arripit, &c. Pers. Sat. v. [159.]

[m] Οὗτινος οὐχ ἡδονὴ κρείττων ἐστὶν, οὐ πόνος, οὐ πλοῦτος, &c. τίνος ἔτι οὗτος δοῦλός ἐστιν;—Arrian. lib. iii. cap. 24. [p. 338.]

pain, to hope or fear, to life or death, and thou art free. What he said in this case, we may say in all other; nothing can overcome him that is not first overcome by his own imaginations and passions. Thou art poor, perhaps, and contemned; what of that, if thou hast not this beggarly thought also, that riches and honour make a man? Another hath a bad opinion of thee; but what then, if thou hast not also a foolish opinion that men's censures are much to be minded? In every thing rule but thyself, and thou shalt be at ease, because thou wilt be thyself; but never wilt thou till then be eased. For remember this as a true saying (which may be added to the reasons foregoing); A proud man hath no God; an unpeaceable man hath no neighbour; a distrustful man hath no friend; and he that is discontented hath not himself.

Not the rich man or the wise man always possesses himself; but *in your patience* (saith our Saviour) *possess ye your souls*[n].

We have found, therefore, where we must begin to lay a foundation for all our rules; viz. in ourselves. But then, secondly, we must build and firmly seat ourselves upon these principles; for if we do not use them, notwithstanding all that I can say, we shall be troubled. By the former discourse you may easily perceive that we cannot be at peace without our own pains. There is nothing that I can say will work as physic doth in the body, by its natural force, whether you think of it or no; but every thing must have the help of your serious consideration, and you must frequently practise according to what you think. As the things that will give us peace must be laid in ourselves, so they cannot be there laid without ourselves. They cannot be applied to our minds as a salve or an ointment to our bodies, but by the force of our own thoughts we must work them into our souls.

One thing more of this nature I must add; but I will reserve it till the conclusion, and now give you those rules that we must live by, telling you as I pass along for what particular disease each one of them is a proper remedy.

[n] Luke xxi. 19.

CHAP. V.

Two rules directing us unto peace, by understanding, and doing, and distinguishing of our duty.

I. KNOW THY DUTY AND DO IT. Charge not thyself with more than thy duty (as those do who think they must always be at prayer, or hearing sermons, or reading spiritual books, or do make rash vows), nor with less than thy duty (as those who do content themselves with the observation of some precepts, or a seldom regard to their whole work); but labour to understand what God requires, and industriously labour to perform it. For it is impossible that either of those in the extremes should be at rest; the one never, because he can never do all that which he thinks he ought; the other not always, because his conscience will sometime rebuke him that he is an hypocrite: i. e. a partial Christian. An ignorant person, therefore, or an idle person, can have no true peace. We must be (1) inquisitive into the gospel, and labour to understand what we have to do; (2) and then resolve heartily and endeavour seriously to do it all; (3) and then inquire what remedy there is if we fail and fall short after these hearty and serious endeavours. The first and last of these do most concern our knowledge, the middle our practice. And the knowing and doing according to our knowledge, and making use of the antidote when we have miscarried, will keep us in peace from that trouble which arises from sin. A wicked man cannot be in peace if he understand himself; and you must not think that I come to prescribe to any but those who will be Christ's disciples, and follow him; (for to such the text speaks.) And a man of a weak understanding will not be in peace; therefore we must grow in knowledge, if we would be without trouble. And a Christian that walks carelessly without observance of himself, ought not to be in peace till he grow more watchful; and then if he be surprised, he knows where to take refuge. But there is no sanctuary in Christ for a trifling and unguarded spirit, without great sorrow, repentance, amendment, and after-care and diligence. We must understand that every indisposition of body is not a sin, and that our peace must not be broken, because we are not always in the same temper, nor cannot so

cheerfully do our duty, &c. We must know that a sudden surprisal, a hasty passion, a sudden thought is not to break us all in pieces. And on the contrary, we must know that our voluntary admission even of these, or letting of them stay, our not watching against them, and our frequent falling into that sin which at first did but surprise us, must trouble us; and there is no peace unless we grow better, and more seriously mind our duty.

Study therefore the Christian religion, as it is contained in the gospel, and then thou wilt find that there is but this one thing more to be done to keep thee in peace, viz. a careful endeavour to live as thou art directed. And the sum of the gospel is this, *Live soberly, righteously and godlily* [o]: and where after all our care we fail, *If we confess our sins, he is faithful and just to forgive us our sins; and the blood of Christ cleanseth us from all unrighteousness* [p]. This first rule, I conceive, will make very good way for all the rest into our souls, and will have a kind of universal influence into us upon all occasions. We need be offended at nothing, if we have a care not to offend God. And I think he said truly who affirmed, that 'there is no joy but in God, and no sorrow but in an evil conscience.'

II. As thou must know thy duty, so LABOUR TO DISTINGUISH BETWEEN THY OWN DUTY AND ANOTHER MAN'S. And this will keep thee from being troubled at the actions and carriage of men in the world towards thee and others. If men slight us, and despise us, and speak evil unjustly of us, and take away our good name, yea, if they take away our estates, &c., if we be not angry, not filled with hatred and despite, nor retaliate their wrongs; then it is not we, but they that ought to be troubled. Our duty is secured, and therein we should rejoice. And I may take occasion here to observe, that we may learn our duty by their ill behaviour, and study the more to avoid those things in ourselves which do so much displease us in others. If we be at all troubled, let it be rather for the sin of him that injures us, than for our own suffering.

This rule may be put into other words, which will make it perhaps comprehensive of more cases. LET US CONSIDER WHAT IS IN OUR POWER, AND WHAT IS NOT.

[o] Tit. ii. 12. [p] 1 John i. 7, 9.

There is nothing in thy own power, but thy own will and choice; all other things are in the hand of God, or in the power of other men. It was never in thy power to be handsome, or witty, or born of noble or virtuous parents, &c.: why then art thou troubled about such things? But it is in thy power to be good and virtuous thyself, to have a beauteous soul, and to be rich in good works, &c.; and if thou be not thus, then thou art concerned. If men's tongues be unruly, and their hands be violent, and thou sufferest unjustly by both, how canst thou help it? Thou art not troubled, if a dog bark or an ass kick, because it is their nature, and thou canst not rule their motions. And here the case is not at all altered; for the tongues of men are as little in thy hands, as the mouths of dogs. These do always bark (as a judicious author speaks [q]) at those they know not, and it is their nature to accompany one another in those clamours: so it is with the inconsiderate multitude. Since these therefore are wholly in another's choice, they fall not under thy deliberation, and therefore are not fit for thy passion. Our anger at him that reproaches us may make us miserable, but it cannot prevent what he hath in his power. Thou mayest do well, and none can hinder it, but to meet with no opposition is not in thy choice. Do what thou canst, the world may make thee suffer; but do what they can, thou mayest suffer contentedly. A philosopher, they say, comforted himself on this fashion, when his daughter proved a wanton: It is none of my fault (said he) and therefore there is no reason it should be my misery. If our children be not as we would have them, if we endeavour they should be so, we may comfort ourselves with such arguments as these: It is in my power to instruct them, but not to make them good; I can do my duty to them, but cannot make them dutiful to me. Consider, I beseech you, what an unreasonable thing it is, that we should depend upon the will of other men for our peace, and not upon our own: or as a great philosopher phraseth it [r], that 'we should have no more reverence to ourselves than to place our happiness in other men's souls.' If they have shown what is in their hand and power to do, let us next show what is in ours,

[q] Sir W. Raleigh. [Preface to History of the World, Works, vol. ii. p. ii.]

[r] . . *ἐν ταῖς ἄλλων ψυχαῖς τιθέναι τὴν σὴν εὐμοιρίαν*,—M. Anton. l. ii. sect. 6. [p. 24.]

and that is, not to be troubled; and so let the matter rest, unless they have a mind to renew a vain attempt. By observing of this rule we shall reap sundry benefits. The censures of all men will not molest us, because it is no part of our duty that men should speak well of what is well done. That we should have the approbation of others, is not in our choice, and so it is not in our charge: it is not incumbent upon us that nothing we do be not misinterpreted, and wrong apprehended. In doing well is our comfort, and in speaking well of others; this let us mind, and think ourselves no further concerned. It will keep us likewise from intermeddling with other men's business, and engaging ourselves in matters that belong not to us, which breeds men no small trouble. It is our duty to do well, but not censure other men's doings. When the scholars of R. Nechoniah asked him, How he prolonged his days to such an age? he answered, I never sought my own honour by another's disgrace: nor ever spoke evil of another, and was liberal of the goods which God hath given me. This was his way to live in quiet, which he thought was the way to live long; but it is too common a fault among us, that we put our hands into other men's work, and so trouble both ourselves and them also. The business of a subject is to obey his prince, and of a servant to execute his master's commands, &c. But men foolishly disturb the world, by taking upon them the authority of calling their prudence in question, and finding fault with that which they have nothing to do withal.

This rids us likewise of curiosity, and inquiring into other men's affairs, or matters done abroad: which, as the wise man notes[s], may occasion some disquiet unto us, unless we relieve ourselves at last by this rule, whereby we might have found help at first;—by not hearkening to private talk.

[s] Eccles. vii. 21.

CHAP. VI.

Two rules more concerning the choice of means and carelessness about events.

III. IN THE DOING OF THY DUTY, MAKE A PRUDENT CHOICE OF THE FITTEST MEANS. Prudence is proper to a man: for angels have something better, (viz. intuition,) and brutes have nothing so good. Do therefore, like a man, be deliberate, and choose discreetly; which two are opposed unto rashness and carelessness, which are the authors of no small troubles. Prudence saves men a great deal of labour in the doing of their duty, and a great deal of trouble for the doing of it; i. e. it keeps us from being molested either by ourselves or others; and therefore Solomon[t] bids us not only *keep the command,* (which is doing of our duty,) but also *discern time and judgment,* which relates to our discretion.

Some men will bring to pass the same thing which others do but endeavour, with more facility and less noise, because, as the same wise man saith, *wisdom is better than strength*[u]. As far therefore as is lawful, let us become *all things to all men,* that we may live in peace and quietness; and let us not, by a tumultuous handling of any matter, give them any occasion to oppose themselves unto us. Yea, prudence will teach us to let some things alone, and not meddle with them, being either needless or else dangerous. As Diogenes said to a man that desired his letters of commendation[v]; "That thou art a man, every one that sees thee will know; and whether thou beest good or bad, he will soon know that hath any skill to make a difference; but if he have no skill, he will not know thee, though I write a thousand times unto him." But when it is fit to do any thing, let us remember that there is a nearer way sometimes to the end of a business than that which is straight forward, and it will be less trouble to seek it out than to go on in the ordinary path. The purchase of peace is worth all our study, and if we can obtain it by art and prudent compliances, we shall find that we are gainers by our labour. Rashness and violence sometimes create us more trouble than men would

[t] Eccles. viii. 5, 6. [u] [ix. 16.] [v] Arrian. lib. ii. cap. 3. [p. 176.]

otherwise have brought upon us. We run ourselves into broils and tumults, and kindle flames about us with our own breath, when other men would let us live in peace and not disturb us[x]. Let us therefore not only be innocent, and mean well, but wise also, and manage well. Next after honesty and integrity, let us study prudence and discretion, so as not to be alike zealous in all things, not passionate and hasty in any thing: but, as St. James saith[y], to *show out of a good conversation our works with meekness of wisdom.* This prudence is a large thing, and of great use in every action of our life; and therefore it must not be expected that I speak to every part of it; but I shall conclude this particular with a saying of one of the Hebrew doctors: There are three sorts of men whose life is no life, *misericordes, iracundi, melancholici*[z]; 'those that pass by all faults; those that are angry at all, and will pass by none; those that are melancholy, as though they were angry and displeased, not only with all others, but with themselves.'

IV. When thou hast used thy prudence, be not solicitous about events. This would be a great preservative against fears of what may happen, and against vexation for what is happened[a]. For to what purpose should we trouble ourselves either with one or the other, when all our prudence and skill cannot help it? Fear indeed betrays our succours, and disarms us of our weapons, and makes us run into those dangers which our prudence might have prevented. If we can therefore act prudently and discreetly, it supposes that we are not dispirited, and will likewise secure us from so being. And if the doing as well as we can, and as wisely as we are able, will satisfy us beforehand, and make timorousness unreasonable; then so it will satisfy us afterward in cross events, and not let us trouble ourselves with a fruitless repentance. The counsel of the son of Sirach is excellently good[b], *Do nothing without advice; and when thou hast once done, repent not.* For I believe most men may say the same which that person did,

[x] Eccles. x. 10, 12.

[y] James iii. 13.

[z] V. Buxtorf. Lex. Talm. voc. רחתן. [col. 2295.]

[a] When one bade a friend to Gratilla to send her no relief because Domitian would take it away, she bravely said, "I had rather he should take it away than I not send it." Duty, not success, is to be considered.

[b] Ecclus. xxxii. 19.

who had so many strange changes in his life: "If I had not used not to repent of any thing I had voluntarily done, even of that which fell out ill, I had lived altogether miserable[b]." Do thy best therefore, and then leave the success to God.

CHAP. VII.

The knowledge of ourselves, together with consideration of the necessary consequents of every thing, are two other remedies against trouble.

V. CONSIDER THY OWN SUFFICIENCY, AND UNDERTAKE NO MORE THAN IS FITTING FOR THEE. If we did live by this rule, and not strain beyond our ability, we should be kept from trouble in our employments. "As one may," was a saying of Socrates[c], and a sentence of great import. Let every one know what he can do, and let him not meddle with *matters too high for him;* and so he may quiet himself, as David tells us by his experience, Ps. cxxxi. 1, 2. Let our desires be according to our power, and let that also be the measure of our actions, and then we shall not implicate and entangle ourselves in things beyond our reach. The pie must not think to sing as well as the nightingale, nor the parrot to talk like a man: every one is not made to govern states, to distribute justice, to resolve great doubts, and to end controversies. Some men must be content to govern their families and themselves, to understand plain truths, and practise them, leaving the rest to men of greater depth and learning. So Siracides directs[d]: *Seek not out things that are too hard for thee, neither search the things that are above thy strength; that which is commanded thee, think upon with reverence; for it is not needful to see the things that are secret.* What he saith in that one instance

[b] Quod si non consuevissem non pœnitere ullius rei quam voluntarie effecerim, etiam quæ male cessisset, prorsus vixissem infelix,—Cardan. [de Vita Propria, cap. 13. tom. i. p. 11.]

[c] Καλὸν τὸ εἰδέναι τὴν αὐτοῦ παρασκεύην καὶ δύναμιν, ἵνα ἐν οἷς μὴ παρασκευάσαι ἡσυχίαν ἄγῃς, μηδ' ἀγανακτῇς εἴ τινες ἄλλοι πλείον σοῦ ἔχουσιν ἐν ἐκείνοις. — Arrian. l. ii. c. 6. [p. 182.]

[d] Ecclus. iii. 21.

may be said in all other. Take not upon thee a calling that is above thy wisdom, and strength, and spirit; for when thou seest thou canst not do these things which by thy place and office thou art engaged unto, it will be a matter of infinite vexation and endless distraction to thy mind. It is of singular use here for every man to observe his own genius and disposition, and to follow that; being contented to be ignorant of, and unable for other things that are without his capacity. It is enough for such a little creature as a man to be good for one thing, and so we may stand in need of one another. If he will venture upon things without his compass, at his own peril and trouble it must be; and that were the less matter, if it would not hazard other men's trouble also. *Without eyes thou shalt want light*[e], saith that wise man in the forementioned chapter; and what wonder is it if thou dost? If men weary themselves in vain when they have no aptness to such things as they undertake, it is but natural, and may be amended by the old rule, "Know thyself." *My son,* (saith Siracides[f],) *prove thy soul in thy life, and see what is evil for it, and give not that unto it. For all things are not profitable for all men, neither hath every soul pleasure in every thing.* And, as an appendix to this rule, give me leave to add this: Employ thyself in as few things as thou canst: undertake not much business. This is the royal philosopher's rule; "Do but a little if thou wouldst have much quiet: peace arises not only from good employments, but also from little: mind always needful things, and let the rest alone[g]." Therefore, when we are going to do any thing, let us say, Is not this in the number of needless things[h]? but, as then he adds, have a care not only to cut off impertinent and unnecessary actions, but thoughts and imaginations also. Our Saviour seems to say the same in the Gospel of St. Luke: *Martha, Martha, thou art careful and troubled about many things*[i]. Flies disquiet us not by their strength, but by their number; and so do great affairs not vex us so much as a number of businesses of little value. But if we must be employed in many, let us not make too much haste

[e] Ecclus. ii. 25.

[f] Ecclus. xxxvii. 27, 28.

[g] Ὀλίγα πρᾶσσε εἰ μέλλεις εὐθυμήσειν, &c.—M. Anton. l. iv. 24. [p. 63.]

[h] Μήτι τοῦτο οὐ τῶν ἀναγκαίων; —[Ibid. p. 64.]

[i] Luke x. 41.

to have done, for we shall but encumber ourselves; and let us despatch them in due order, one after another, or else we shall do none well to our own content.

VI. CONSIDER THE CONSEQUENT OF EVERY ACTION, AND OF EVERY THING; AND EITHER CHOOSE ALL ITS APPENDANT TROUBLES AND INCONVENIENCES, OR ELSE LET IT ALONE. There is nothing in the world but it is as a lily among the thorns: every rose hath its prickles about it; and there is nothing so desirable but it hath some associates we could wish separate from its company. The best thing in the world hath its faults; and therefore if we would have peace, let us consider always the τὰ ἀκόλουθα, as Epictetus speaks[j], 'the things that follow' or accompany every action and every condition; and either let us not choose the thing itself, or else receive all its retinue together with it. By this means we shall save ourselves the trouble of repentance for a foolish choice, and we shall not be put to the unwise man's complaint, *Non putaram*[k], 'I never dreamt of this;' I imagined not there had been all these unpleasing things mixed with what I desired. Who should have thought of this but thyself? How like an idiot dost thou look in thy own thoughts, when thou art thus surprised! How ridiculous doth it appear for a man to sit down and cry like a child, 'If I had known thus much, I would never have made such a venture; I would not have meddled with this calling or business if I had thought there would have been so much trouble in it!' Thou shouldst have thought of this before, and then have made this choice. Honour must be chosen *cum suo onere*, with its suitors and followers, and public appearances, &c. And so marriage must be chosen with all its cares, the diligence of pleasing another, the loss or undutifulness of children, &c., and so every office with its incumbrances and difficulties. Yea, the service of God as well as service of men must be chosen in the same manner[l]. We must in all our choices take all or none, or else be miserable. And if we have not had this forehanded care, it is so much the harder to relieve us, because possibly we cannot do or endure all things in which we are necessarily engaged; yet let us resolve to do them as well as we can, and make a virtue of a

[j] [Enchir. cap. 29.]

[k] ["Non putavi hoc futurum, nunquam hoc eventurum credidissem."—Sen. de Tranq. An. cap. xi. §. 7. Cf. de Ira, iii. 31; et Plut. de Tranq. An. p. 474.]

[l] Luke xiv. 28, 29.

necessity. If it be not in our liberty to choose our condition, yet let us now resolve to choose all its inconveniences, and make that light by patience and constancy which cannot otherwise be amended. And indeed it is the unhappiness of most men to be involved in many things before they either can or do consider; whereby they are in danger to lead a life full of miseries, unless for the time to come they be better advised before they choose, and find means to content themselves in regard of what is past.

CHAP. VIII.

It is of great import to consider well what we enjoy, and we should cast that in the balance against our wants, which is the substance of one rule more.

VII. COMPARE WHAT THOU HAST NOT WITH WHAT THOU HAST, AND SEE WHICH IS BETTER. This will keep thee from trouble for what thou wantest, and thy desires shall not disquiet thee. Tell all the joints of thy body, and compare them with the want of a finger, or an eye, or any such member. Whether is a hundred or one more? Thou art poor, but thou art well, and hast many good friends, &c., or perhaps thou hast none; but thou hast all the host of heaven, the sun, moon, and stars, and all the elements, and the providence of God, and the charity of all well-disposed people as much as another man. Thou mayest walk in thy neighbour's field, yea in thy enemy's ground, and enjoy all the pleasures of the morning, and recreate thyself with all the sweet odours, and behold the beauty of all God's creatures, and delight in that which God delights in. Why then shouldst thou be so distracted? Thou goest a journey and art disappointed of thy ends, and dost lose thy labour, but thou escapedst thieves and robbers; or villains set upon thee, but they saved thy life, they have not robbed thee of thy land, &c. Thou hast lost a child perhaps, but how many hast thou remaining! or is not thy husband or wife well? or if they be gone, and thy estate also gone, and thou thyself sick also, and the case be supposed as bad as can be, yet art thou not alive? and what wouldst thou not part withal rather than die? thou wilt not, I

know, exchange thy hopes of staying in the world for all things else, for they are nothing unto thee if thou beest not.

But, you will say, this is very cold comfort to consider that a man lives. Think then further that there are thousands of good people that pray for thee every day, and all thy good neighbours pity thee, and will strive to relieve thee; or if this will not do, consider that though thou wantest temporal things, yet thou enjoyest spiritual. Thou art sick, but thy sins are pardoned, (for to Christ's disciples I speak,) or if they be not, (and I must say something to others,) then I say first, I cannot blame thee that thou art troubled; but then why dost thou trouble thyself that thou art poor, or sick, or any thing else, but only for this, that thou art a condemned sinner? What should a damned man do with riches? Why dost thou trouble thyself about such little things as the loss of a child, when thou hast lost thy soul? Yea, why art thou troubled more that thou art sick, than that thou art not like to be saved? What folly was it in the man that complained his stocking was rent, and minded not the wound of his leg! one would think the great trouble should swallow up the other, though it cannot cure it; and thou shouldst be most solicitous how to get sin pardoned, whether thou dost live or die. But,

Secondly, if thy sin be not pardoned, and therefore thou desirest to be well, yet it is a huge mercy that there is hopes it may be pardoned? And if thou dost understand thyself, thou wouldst not lose these very hopes for all the riches in the world, and the best state of health thou canst imagine. But to return, suppose thou art a person truly fearing God, but art troubled that thou hast not such sweet friends, and good company, and delightful society, and art not so esteemed and regarded, or hast not the fortune which attends upon others. Yet thou hast thyself[m], and thou hast a good conscience, and thou hast God, and his Son and Holy Spirit, and the promises of the gospel, and the hopes of heaven, and joy in the Holy Ghost. Which now dost thou judge greater? thy wants or enjoyments? Such a man who hath deserved of thee doth not

[m] Estne aliquid tibi teipso pretiosius? Nihil, inquies. Igitur si tui compos fueris, possidebis quod nec tu amittere velis, nec fortuna possit auferre,—Boeth. lib. ii. de Consol. [pros. 4.]

love thee perhaps, nor regard thee, &c. But what then? he cannot take away the love of God, nor the love of his children, no nor thy love to him neither.

Now if it be thus in these and all other cases, I pray tell me who will pity him that hath many soft pillows whereon to lay his head, and he will needs lay it on a stone? that hath many pleasant places wherein to repose himself, and none will serve him but he will sit upon a bush of thorns? Surely they are in love with sorrow and melancholy, who enjoy so many blessings and contentments, and will forsake the pleasure of them, to pine away in the company of their wants. Consider, I beseech you, is there more cause to be troubled for the want of those, or to rejoice for the possession of these other? or by what reason shall the absence of some things spoil all the sweetness of those that remain? why should those be more able to comfort us if we had them, than these we now have? This is the most manifest cheat of ourselves that can be; no man likes that which is his own, and yet every one thinks that he shall be well pleased in the condition of another man[n]. He thinks that he shall be contented with that wherein the other man is not contented himself. By what argument, I pray you, is this concluded? how foolishly do we suborn our desires and hopes to betray our duty and comfort! If he be not contented in his condition, (but perhaps think ours to be better, in which we also are not contented,) why should we think to find contentment in it? But if he be content in his estate, then so may we be in ours. What any man is, that every man may be. Therefore, if thou canst not cease complaining, I must advise thee to handle thyself roughly, and when thy mind is troubled, whines and cries for such and such a bauble, do with it as we do by children when they cry they know not for what, affright it with the representation of some terrible thing; show it the pains of hell, ask it how it likes to burn in eternal flames, and whether it can be contented to be damned. Let it see there is something indeed to cry for, if it cannot be quiet; and bid it tell thee if it be an easy thing to dwell with everlasting burnings. And when it starts at the thoughts of them, bid it be quiet then, and well

[n] Quis est ille tam felix, qui cum dederit impatientiæ manus, statum suum mutare non optet?—Boeth. [ibid. lib. ii. pros. 3.]

pleased, if it can fly from such a misery, whatsoever else it can endure.

And to make this consideration the more efficacious, when thou considerest what thou hast, frame to thyself such an apprehension of that thing as thou hast of it, when thou dost want it. Understand now what thou dost enjoy, as thou wouldst do if thou didst not enjoy it. Consider how desirable health is to a sick man, or friends to a poor man, &c.; and so let them be in thy eyes. Thou wantest plenty, but thou hast enough: thou wantest riches, but thou hast health; thou wantest health, but thy sins are forgiven. Consider now, suppose thou wert sick, or thy sins were not pardoned, in what a case wouldst thou then be; what wouldst thou most complain of? for the want of them, or for the want of the things thou now groanest under? Answerable to the trouble thou shouldst have in the want of those things, let thy quiet be now in the possession of them: and as thy grief for the want of such things would exceed all that which is in thee at present for the want of others; so let thy present thankfulness and contentedness be that thou wantest them not: which is another way of making this rule efficacious,—Compare the want of the things thou hast with the want of the things thou now hast not.

CHAP. IX.

Two considerations more: one of the wants of others; another of the uncertainty of our own enjoyments.

VIII. If thou dost consider what thou wantest, and canst not but look upon it, and compare thyself with others, then COMPARE THYSELF WITH ALL MEN, AND NOT WITH A FEW: OR, secondly, WITH THE WHOLE CONDITION OF THOSE FEW, AND NOT WITH SOME PART OF IT; and this will be a remedy for the same kind of trouble from discontent, and from envy, with all evils of like nature. First, I say, look upon all men, and thou wilt see there are thousands of persons with whom thou wouldst not for any thing change conditions. By what law then is it that thou must needs only gaze above, and take no notice of those beneath? that thou must look on him only who is carried on men's

shoulders, (as one did excellently resemble this folly,) and think it is a fine thing to be so mounted; and never think of the poor men that carry him, in whose place thou wouldst by no means stand. Thou art not alone in the condition wherein thou art; yea, there are thousands in a worse, and yet (which is more) they are contented. Down with thy high looks, and stare not only upon the great mountains; be content to take notice of those a little that sit in the valleys, yea, of those that embrace a dunghill. Or, secondly, if thou canst not keep thy eyes off from those great men, then compare thyself with the whole of them, and not with some one piece, and then tell me whether thou wouldst wholly change conditions with them, and be as they are. Are there not many inconveniences in their condition which thou wouldst not meddle withal? thou wouldst have his wealth, but not his cares, nor his fears, nor his ignorance perhaps and folly, nor wouldst thou be troubled with his vices. To be short, none of you would have been the rich man in the Gospel for all the world[o]: Lazarus, as miserable as he was, would not have been in his case. Nay, you will scarce fancy any man so complete, but there is something or other in ourselves that we fancy more, which we would keep, and have all that he hath too. But why must thou needs have all? why must every one else be deplumed for to trim thee? why must none else be pleased but thy own single self? And besides, seeing there is something in thyself, which thou lovest more than all the world, and wouldst still be that, whatsoever else thou changest; why cannot that content thee, and give thee rest, seeing it is so much worth to thee? He that will go about to make an answer to me will cure himself, unless he resolve to be unreasonable. Let me subjoin this one rule which tends to the same purpose with the former, and will comprehend all of this kind: Distinguish between real needs and artificial; i. e. those needs which God made, and those which thy own fancy hath created. It is most certain that the needs which God hath made are but few, and soon filled, and God hath made provision for them: therefore all this kind of trouble flows from thy own fancy, which if it pleases can create a thousand necessities to itself, which are indeed none at all; and by the same reason that it makes a thousand, it may

[o] Luke xvi.

create ten times as many: for there are no limits when once we are gone beyond nature and necessity. If these needs therefore are a burden to thee, blame nothing but thy own folly, and by the help of God's grace seek a cure in thyself. Reduce thyself to nature and real needs, and thou wilt never be troubled about these matters, because thou wilt always have what nature desires; yea, the way to have that is not to desire any more. So a wise man among the Jews once said, *Quære id quod tibi necessarium est,* &c. 'Seek that which is necessary for thee, and leave that which is not necessary: for by leaving to follow that which is not necessary, thou wilt obtain that which is.' I remember that when some blamed Cato that such a man as he would be in want, (as we speak,) he blamed them rather because they could not want, viz. such things as those which are not really needful for us. And I think he might have blamed them also upon this score, that they were in want because they thought they were. And if we would but deny ourselves sometimes in unnecessary desires, even when it is in our hands to humour ourselves and gratify our desires, it would be of excellent use; for we must remember that as long as the things of this world are empty and finite, our trouble will not end by satisfying, but by ceasing our desires.

IX. COUNT NOTHING CERTAIN THAT IS WITHOUT THYSELF; AND THINK THY SOUL, NOT THY BODY, TO BE THYSELF. Thou mayest be certain of thy own choice, if thou knowest thyself; and thou canst tell what thou wilt do, but thou canst not be certain what will be in the world, or what other men will do; and therefore reckon upon nothing as constant and stable but thy own resolution, which may be constant if thou pleasest, and this will keep thee from trouble about what thou losest. When health and riches and such like things are gone, then thou canst say, I never made account that they would stay[p]. It was accounted of old a piece of great wisdom to wonder at nothing; and this is the way to it, which thing alone the poet thought was almost enough to make one happy and keep him so.

> *Nil admirari prope res est una, Numici,*
> *Solaque quæ possit facere et servare beatum*[q],

[p] Μηδὲν θαυμάζειν. [q] Horat. [lib. i. Epist. 6.]

But he will not cease to admire that knows not the nature of things; and he knows nothing that doth not see they are constant only in inconstancy.

CHAP. X.

Three directions more, showing how we should shut the world out of ourselves, and avoid self-flattery, and take heed of a rash anger at our own selves.

X. WHAT IS WITHOUT THEE KEEP IT AS FAR AS IS POSSIBLE WITHOUT THEE. Let many things not come in unto thee, nor do thou go out to them, i. e. let not them into thy heart by love, and let not thy heart go out to them by desire. Make few things to become a piece of thyself, which are without thyself; for if thou lovest many things of which, as I said before, thou canst not be certain, thou wilt be often troubled at their loss, or at their danger. This rule may serve also to fortify you against the same kind of trouble (among others) for the relief of which I prescribed the former. Keep but every thing there where it is, and all is safe. If the world change and alter, that is nothing unto us, if it be not within us. If it have no hold of our hearts, how are we concerned in its various mutations? We shall never suffer together with the world if it be not a part of us. But if we set open the door and entertain it, if we embrace it and let it dwell in us by our love cleaving to it, then we shall be as it is; and nothing can give us a remedy but the casting of it out again, and setting it where it was, quite out of ourselves. It is a true rule, that no good can bring us any pleasure but that against whose loss we are prepared. He that is in fear doth not sincerely enjoy: and it is as true, that we shall have no mind to lose that which we love dearly. Now what a miserable case is this, to be troubled with fear while we have a thing lest we lose it, and be troubled with grief when it is gone because we have lost it? But I have taught you how to provide against both these, and against all sudden accidents and changes that are in the world. Keep thyself as thou art. Let very little in which is without. I say very little, because some things press into our hearts, and get

into our affections whether we will or no. We cannot but love some agreeable persons; and there are others whom we ought to love, because of the obligation we have to them. These take such hold of our hearts that they become a piece of it; and we seem to have lost half of ourselves when they are gone. Against this there is no remedy but one: since they will be within us, let them not take up the best room there. Make them know their place, and keep them below God and our Saviour, and his precious promises. Do but love thy Creator and Redeemer above all, and thou wilt find fulness and satisfaction there, when the departure of a very dear friend hath made a wide breach and a great vacuity in thy heart. The next rule also may help to give some relief, if thou dost but use it in good time.

XI. Do not promise thyself that which God never promised thee. This heals all the evils which arise from vain hopes, and cools the anger of those sores which are caused by frustration of our expectations. It is lawful to desire several things which are uncertain, if God see them good for us; but let us not promise to ourselves any of them. Do not enjoy thy friends, or any other good, as if thou hadst a lease of them for thy life. Do not entertain thy thoughts with promises of contentment in such a relation and such a condition, nor of success in such an enterprise, no, though thou goest about it wisely: but promise to thyself pardon of sin and eternal life, if thou dost thy duty, and the grace of God to help thee for to do it, if thou pray for it, and wilt use it: for all these things God hath promised to give us. Solomon saith that *the race is not to the swift*[r], &c., but time and chance happeneth to them all. Now because men know not the time when things will alter, and, which is worse, promise to themselves those things, as if there were no time nor chance but what they fancy; therefore he saith that *evil falleth suddenly* (and therefore sadly) *upon them*[s]. Hope and fear are two great instruments of our trouble, and we must cure them both, as I have directed in this and the former rule. And if we will hope for any thing, let it be (as I said before) in the days of our sorrow and adversity, to support our heaviness; not in the days of prosperity, to please our fancy. We have good things enough then to comfort us:

[r] Eccles. ix. 11. [s] Ver. 12.

and if we will spend our thoughts in airy hopes, we make ourselves miserable two ways; we lose the pleasure of what we have, and never enjoy what we look for. And therefore I think he made a good answer, who being asked which man's grief never ceased, said, *Cujus cor non acquiescit in præsentibus*, 'whose heart is not contented with what he hath at present.' And he likewise was well employed, who for fifteen years together with great pains endeavoured to get the habit of hoping for nothing[t]; especially since (as he saith) he did obtain it; for no question he found a great ease to his spirit by it.

XII. THINK THAT THOU ART MOST ANGRY AT THYSELF WHEN THOU DOST AMEND. Many create themselves no small trouble by being troubled at the disorder and disquiet of their spirit in cross accidents. And I give this rule to take off all that trouble which proceeds from displeasure against ourselves for our unquietness under God's hand, or that trouble which we feel for the sins we have admitted, if it hinder our duty. And this indeed is oft-times the greatest inquietude and trouble of all other. Men roll their souls in very vexatious and impatient thoughts, because they were vexed and impatient; and so they commit that again which they should cure, and unless they will cease it the disease will grow more desperate. For they are impatient if their trouble be not cured, and their disease instantly healed: but, alas! this which they take for the medicine is the very disease. Trouble doth but make the sore rankle and fester the more, and inflame the fever to a greater heat: therefore coolly and mildly seek to amend thy trouble by some of the former rules that I have proposed. Remember, the more thou vexest thyself, the further thou art from being healed; and, like a bird that is restless in a net, thou art more entangled and perplexed. Go therefore seriously always and consideratcly about the cure, when thou art troubled at any accident, and think that this is a signification of the greatest displeasure against thyself when thou art amended, and thy mind is again in peace. You may see how calmly David argues himself into a stillness; *Why art thou cast down, O my soul*[u],

[t] .. Habitum nihil sperandi, cui adipiscendo 15 perpetuis annis maximo labore incubui, et obtinui.— Cardan. [de Vita Propria, cap. 13. tom. i. p. 10.]

[u] Ps. xlii. 11; xliii. 5.

&c. If he had fretted at this disquiet which was in him, and raised storms against himself, the commotion would but have been like a new boisterous wind upon the face of the sea already troubled, which would but make it more rough and restless. Let the sun shine rather than the wind blow: I mean, with a clear understanding labour placidly to compose and appease thy heart, and not by fresh gusts of black passion bluster and rage against thyself.

CHAP. XI.

Humility and self-annihilation, knowledge and judgment, simplicity and purity, constancy and fixedness in one thing, are four excellent means to keep us from trouble.

THERE are three or four rules that are more general and universal, which perhaps may serve instead of all the rest for to heal all troubles from without; which, because they are so large and comprehensive, I will superadd.

I. HAVE A LITTLE CARE OF THYSELF. *Superbus et avarus nunquam quiescunt,* saith a devout author[u]; 'a proud man and a covetous never are at rest.' The leaves of the tall trees shake with every breath; and no man can open his mouth to whisper an ill word, but a proud man is disturbed: whereas the observance of this rule will make us say, when we are contemned and despised, that they cannot think so low of us as we of ourselves, and then we shall not be moved. It will help us in poverty, sickness, and all misfortunes, whilst we say, Less than the least of all God's mercies. Our conceit, sure, of ourselves is the cause that we quarrel at every thing that happens; as if we were such considerable creatures, that every thing must be done to please us, and God must rule the whole world according to our humour, yea, and nobody else must be served and gratified but ourselves. Some things there are which fall out that are good for others when they are ill for me; and therefore it is a high piece of pride for me to be troubled, as if I were such a goodly thing that God should mind none but me, and all creatures in heaven and in earth should wait upon me, doing every thing according to my liking.

[u] Tho. à Kemp. [de Imit. Christi, lib. i. cap. 6. § 1.]

Away with this fond love of ourselves, and ridiculous overweening. I beseech you, let us know ourselves, and all will be well. There is no reason that such poor things as we are should take matters so ill and unkindly at God's hands as we do: we are well used if we were in a worse condition.

II. LABOUR TO UNDERSTAND THE TRUE NATURE AND VALUE OF EVERY THING. I will instance in a few things. That which is future is uncertain; that which is born may die; that which once was not may again not be: what hath happened to others may happen to me: that which hath its value from fancy is not much worth: that which can be bought cannot be great: that which can do us no harm unless we will, need not be feared: that which a man can live without he need not covet. Such like rules as these will the consideration of the nature of things teach us; and then, when we have learned what they are, let us remember the usual saying of Epictetus, "If thou lovest a pot, remember it is a pot which thou lovest[x];" i. e. a thing of a base nature, and also brittle and soon broken; and it is no great wonder, nor no great matter, if it be. So in all other cases. If thou lovest a flower, or a man, remember it is but a flower, but a man. If thou hopest for any thing, remember thou hast but only hopes. And thus doing, thou wilt find much quiet from many occasions of trouble.

III. HAVE BUT ONE END, AND BRING ALL THINGS TO THAT: which in the great emperor's phrase is thus expressed, Ἁπλωσον σεαυτὸν, 'reduce thyself to a simplicity[y].' The true end, and that which is the greatest, is such an one that all things will promote it; and that end is the glorifying God, and saving our souls. Whatsoever falls out will advance this; and if we secure our end, what need we be troubled? We may always have what we would, if we would not have too many things, but only one. For nothing can hinder our doing God honour, and advancing

[x] Ἐφ' ἑκάστου τῶν ψυχαγωγούντων, ἡ χρείαν παρεχόντων, ἢ στεργομένων, μέμνησο ἐπιλέγειν, ὁποῖόν ἐστιν, ἀπὸ τῶν σμικροτάτων ἀρξάμενος· ἂν χύτραν στέργῃς, ὅτι χύτραν στέργω· κατεαγείσης γὰρ αὐτῆς, οὐ ταραχθήσῃ. Ἂν παίδιον σαυτοῦ καταφιλῇς, ἢ γυναῖκα, ὅτι ἄνθρωπον καταφιλεῖς· ἀποθάνοντος γὰρ οὐ ταραχθήσῃ. Epict. Enchir. cap. 3. Compare Lord Bacon's application of the same maxim, Advancement of Learning, vol. ii. p. 81.]

[y] M. Anton. l. iv. [§. 26. p. 64.]

[z] Τίς εἶναι θέλεις σαυτῷ πρῶτον εἶπε, εἶθ' οὕτω ποιεῖ ἃ ποιεῖς. Arrian. l. iii. c. 23. 'Tell thyself first what thou wilt be, and then do all things that thou mayest be what thou wouldst.' [p. 323.]

the good of our souls: yea, without those things that we account sad, sometimes we should not attend that end. So David said it, *It was good that he was afflicted, else he had gone astray.* Howsoever it fares with us, there is some grace or other to be exercised; and the exercise of every one of them is in order to what we design, God's glory and our good. Remember therefore what our Saviour saith, *Thou art careful about many things, but one thing is needful*[a]. Mind that, and thou needest not be troubled, because thou mayest alway mind it. The sum of this is, he that hath proposed but one great end at which he levels all his actions, the obtaining of which nothing can hinder, but all things promote, and which he may alway in every condition pursue, need not be troubled. For every thing rests satisfied in its end, and this he may always have, if it be that which it should be.

IV. As we should have but one end, so LET US HAVE BUT ONE RULE OR PRINCIPLE OF OUR LIVES. I know you will be glad to hear what that one rule should be. I cannot tell how to comprehend it in shorter words than these; Let us alway will, and not will the same thing. I told you in the first rule of all, that we must acquaint ourselves with the gospel. Now let us will only those things that Christ hath commanded, and refuse only those that Christ hath forbidden; and that is the principle whereby we may guide our lives, and it will never fail us. The truth is, that must needs be good which a man can always will: and it is impossible that any thing but what hath no evil in it should never cease to be chosen by us. Let us resolve therefore what things we will ever choose, and what we will ever refuse; and for the rest, let them be as they will. Now Christ hath said, Be holy, humble, meek, patient; but nowhere hath he said, Be rich, be honoured, or the like. The former therefore, and not these, we must always will. He hath bid us likewise, that we should not speak evil of others, nor hate them, nor return their injuries; but nowhere hath he said, Do not suffer affliction, do not put up those wrongs, &c.; the former then are the things only that we must will not to do. And by this course it is manifest what a great way we shall go to the obtaining peace. For we shall always be certain of something. When a man's estate is gone, and his friends

[a] Luke x. 41.

deceased, or the like, he may say, But I am here still, and I can do what I always could; choose the good and refuse the evil. I never did will not to be poor, nor to be destitute of relations, nor to suffer reproaches. They are other things that I make the matter of my choice; and I find that I am where I was, because I can do those things which are the only things which I choose to do. This will fortify us against what men say of us. Follow Scripture and reason, and let the world approve of what we do if they please. Nothing more troubles us than an ambitious desire of every one's good word; but *Haud parum artis opus est, si quis stulto placere velit*, saith the proverb among the Spaniards; 'he shall have enough to do that would please a fool.' But how much trouble he shall have that would please nobody knows how many of them, is not to be imagined. He must not will one thing, but ten thousand; one thing this moment, and another the next, and innumerable contradictions at the same time to please divers men. Content thyself therefore with this, God is sooner pleased than men: resolve upon his will to let that be thine, and keep to it. Choose that which nobody can hinder, no accident can forbid; if thou cannot do God's will, thou canst suffer it; why then shouldst thou be troubled when thy own choice remains entire, and thou hast what thou wouldst.

CHAP. XII.

A caution, and the conclusion, showing that these things suppose the practice of more general rules; and that we must not have these truths to get when we have need of them.

To prevent all misunderstanding, I must desire you to consider, that all these rules are such as suppose the use of some other, that have an universal influence upon all Christian practice, and these must be joined with them, not severed from them. As first, prayer. Secondly, giving thanks in everything. Thirdly, meditation of heaven and eternal blessedness. Fourthly, of God's fulness and the glories of his attributes. Fifthly, of Christ's death and intercession, with such like[b]; to

[b] See Phil. iv. 6, 7; 2 Cor. iv. 17, 18; Psalm. xxxi. 19, xlii. 11; Heb. ii. 17, 18, iv. 15, 16.

all which religious exercises if we add those rational and natural considerations, we may be well eased.

The truth is, there are no such cordials as those of the Christian religion. Nothing can support and comfort us so speedily and substantially as the belief that *God was manifested in our flesh*, and therefore hath a singular love to us and care of us: that the Lord Jesus is exalted at the right hand of God, and that *we are members of his body, of his flesh, and of his bones:* that he hath a great compassion to us, and both power and will to relieve or sustain us: that we suffer nothing but what he himself did, and are in the way to that glory where he dwells: and that he will certainly reward our patience, submission and resignation to him with endless joys. These things we must always have in our eye and in our heart. On these foundations we must lay the weight of our souls; which will quiet our desires, and banish our fears, and cut off vain hopes, and restore our very reason to a greater clearness and strength: so that we shall be the better able to use all other helps for the curing all the diseases we labour under.

What remains then, but our hearty endeavour thus to settle and compose ourselves? I told you at the entrance, that these rules are not like to physic, that will cure us without our thoughts and considerations: so now I must further remember you, that we must not think to take this course as some men likewise do physic, just when the distemper is upon us, but when we are well and in quiet. When the trouble is once begun, and the disease hath seized upon our spirits, it is not so easily cured, and we cannot so well consider nor apply these lessons to our minds; therefore we must use them as we do food, which we take every day to keep us in health, and not as physic, which we take but at certain times, when we find the humour stirring, i. e. we must work our souls to such kind of reasonings and discourses as these are, we must bring our minds to such a way of thinking as I have described, and make these rules so familiar to our minds, that they may be a part of our understanding, and a piece of our reason, not some foreign things to which we run for relief upon occasion of need. We must strip our souls of their former conceits, and clothe them with these notions. We must root out these weeds of bitterness, high esteem of ourselves and of worldly things,

earthly love, unreasonable desire, fond hopes and expectations, rashness and inconsideration; and plant in their stead such good principles as now have been commended to you, and take care that they grow up there. The government of the soul must be altered from the rule of popular opinions, and the tyranny of fancies and imaginations, to the sole command of Christian reason. In this great alteration let us engage all our forces. Think how shameful it is to get all knowledge, and not to know ourselves, nor how to enjoy ourselves; and how miserable he is that encompasses all the world, and searches into all things, only neglects his own peace, or seeks it among the occasions of his trouble. Discharge thyself therefore with all speed of thy passions, of rashness and hasty thoughts. Learn thy duty, do it, know God, and thyself, and the world; and when thou art once humble, prudent, thankful, and heavenly-minded, thou wilt not be displeased at what God or men do: nothing will trouble thee; or if any thing do, it will be this, that thou dost these things no better, and art no more perfect in thy art. But this is the happiness of such a man's condition, that *those who mourn shall be comforted;* and it is a pleasure to be so troubled, an ease to the mind to be so aggrieved. No joys here like those of an ingenuous sorrow; no cup of blessing so sweet as that which is mingled with tears of true contrition for our ingratitude. With a good saying therefore of a wise doctor among the Jews I will conclude, who, seeing a man very sad and sorrowful, thus addressed his speech to him: "If thy grief be for the things of this world, I pray God diminish it: but if it be for the things of the world to come, I pray God increase it [b]."

[b] [Apophthegm. Patr. Jud. lib. iii. 239. ad calc. Vitæ Mosis, per Gaulmyn.]

A

CONSOLATORY DISCOURSE

TO PREVENT

IMMODERATE GRIEF

FOR

THE DEATH OF OUR FRIENDS.

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SECT. I.

Wherein is shown the need of a consolatory discourse against the loss of our friends.

The need of this discourse.

It is left upon record by St. Hierom concerning Paulina, that though she was a lady whose passions were under admirable government in other things, yet when any of her children died, she was oppressed with so great sorrow, that he had much ado to save her from being drowned in the floods of it. But it is not so great a wonder that a person of the tenderer sex should feel such a tempest, as that David, a man of war, who had so overcome many enemies, should himself be overcome with grief for a disobedient son. It is said that a Lacedemonian woman, having sent five sons to a battle, stood at the gates of Sparta to expect the event: and when she met one coming from the camp, she asked him what was done. All thy five sons (said the man) are slain. Away, thou fool, (answered she again,) I inquired not of this, but of the issue of the fight. When he told her that her countrymen had got the better; then farewell, my sons, (said she,) and let us rejoice that Sparta is saved[a]. But David[b], it seems, had not attained to this feminine courage; for he sat between the

[a] [Plut. Instit. Lacon. p. 241.]

[b] 2 Sam. xviii. 24.

gates waiting for news of the success, and when he heard of the loss but of one son, and he a traitor to his country, he could not contain himself till he came into the house, *but went up to the chamber over the gate* to lament his son, as though he had lost the day by losing him[c]. Nay, he could not refrain so long till he came into the chamber, but he watered the stairs with his tears; and wept as he went up, saying. *O my son Absalom, my son, my son Absalom; would God I had died for thee, O Absalom, my son, my son.*

This lamentation of his cannot but call to mind the tears which Achilles, another great warrior, shed over the grave of his friend Patroclus, where, *σμερδαλέον δ' οἴμωξεν,* (as Homer speaks[d],) 'he wept most horribly,' as if he would have killed himself.

This love is such a powerful thing, that if it hath placed any object in our heart, we can scarce suffer it to be taken from us without rending and tearing our hearts in pieces. Such a strange union doth it make between two persons, that we can scarce give that man any welcome that brings us the news of a separation. And therefore some of the ancient Carthaginians, (as I remember,) knowing how hard it is to love those who bring us the tidings of the death of them that we love, would never send such a message but by the hand of some condemned man, whom they were never like to see again. I am ready here to interrupt my discourse, and in the very beginning to fall into a passion with myself when I think how patiently we can suffer our souls to be divided from God whom we pretend to love. O love! how great things should we do if we did but love! how angry should we be at the temptation which would draw him from us whom our souls love!

Antonius Guevara had a niece who was so passionately in love with a little bitch, that at the death of it she fell into a fever, and was fain to keep her bed. The good man did well rather to chide than to comfort her, and to write a satire rather than a consolatory letter to her[e]: but yet in that strange passion of hers we may clearly see how incident it is unto us to take heavily the loss of what we love.

Now there is no greater love than that which is between

[c] 2 Sam. xviii. 33. [d] [Il. Σ. 35.]
[e] Epist. ad Famil. pars 2. [p. 660. 4to. Madr. 1595.]

near kindred and friends, and no man that knows the pleasure of it would dissuade any from such love; and yet it is necessary that we should not mourn for them as if we loved nothing else: which will render it perhaps an acceptable piece of service unto some, if I endeavour to ease them of this kind of sorrow; and though I have touched but lightly upon other maladies (in the foregoing treatise), yet I apply some particular plasters to this great and general sore.

SECT. II.

Wherein is shown that we may grant nature leave to ease itself by moderate tears; and two advices are given to keep us from making an ill use of this grant.

We may mourn moderately.

You must not think that it is my design to take away your trouble by taking you off from all love and friendship, for that would be as ridiculous as the device to cure drunkenness by cutting up all the vines. I would not have a man to love none but himself, out of a fear that he should be troubled at the loss of them as much as at the loss of himself. This would be to cure one evil by a greater, and to ease men of a short trouble by letting them want the constant easement and sweetest comfort of our lives, which is our friends. Neither do I intend to write like a Stoic, and stupify all your passions so that you should not mourn at all, for that is an impossible thing if we have any love. Grace doth not root out nature, nor quite dry up all our tears; but it rather makes our hearts more moist and tender, and causes it to express itself in a becoming affection unto others; as David and that lady may teach us. They are sturdy, not generous, that are void of all grief: they are rather hard than constant, rather unexperienced than reasonable, that forbid all sadness. But it is my design to bring you to a moderation both in love and in sorrow, that you may do as much as becomes good friends, but no more than becomes good men. Not to be sensible of evils, is not to be men; not to bear them patiently, is not to be Christians. It is neither to be hoped nor

to be desired that we should shed no tears at all; but it is both necessary and attainable that we should let them flow in measure. *Lachrymandum est, sed non plorandum*[f], 'we may weep, but we must not wail and lament.' We must be natural, but we must be also reasonable: we must approve ourselves both to men and unto God, that they may see we are loving friends, and that he may see we are his dutiful children. *Est enim quædam et dolendi modestia;* 'for there is a certain modesty even in mourning,' and it is as unseemly to weep immoderately as it is not to weep at all.

And let none think that by this concession unto nature and decency the wound will be made incurable; and that it is easier not to mourn at all than to mourn moderately. These are but the dreams of heavy souls, that think that none can stand still but they that are resolved never to stir. It is said indeed that we may more easily abstain from a thing of which we never tasted, than refrain from it after a little acquaintance. But this must be understood of pleasure, and not of grief; when we have mourned a little we shall soon see that there is neither pleasure nor profit in our mourning. Or if any one shall think it to be some pleasure, yet it will notwithstanding be easily moderated, because it is only the pleasure of being eased of our loads that oppressed us, not of being satisfied with the pressure of any delightful object. It is but the letting out of sadness, not the bringing in of any pleasure; and therefore when the heart is once eased of its burden, it will soon be persuaded to mourn no more, for that will be the bringing upon us a new burden.

But then on the other side, as we may grant something unto nature, so we must be sure not to let it work alone. That we may weep moderately, it will be necessary to make resistance to our sorrows, and muster up all the consolatory arguments that are reposited in our minds. Nature will do its part without our help. We need not study how to weep enough, nor use any arguments to persuade ourselves into tears. It is a superfluous employment to strive to magnify our loss, for fancy is apt to make it bigger than it is. It is a foolish trouble to be careful how to mourn, for tears will flow from us without any

[f] Seneca. [Epist. lxiii.]

bidding. All our work must be to stop their passage as fast as we can, and to make them flow leisurely, not gush forth with too great a violence. Our reason and religion must be called up in all haste, to make as strong a dam as we are able to our sorrow, or else, if it have its course, it may overflow us.

He is a base pilot that leaves his tackling in a storm, and suffers his ship to run along with the tempest; and no less ignoble and abject is his spirit that permits himself to the gusts and hurricanes of his own passions, and lets them drive him whither they, and not whither he himself pleases. But it is a degree of madness to use reason itself to make the blasts more terrible, and when the storm is too furious, by art and skill to conjure up more boisterous passions. Who would pity him that sets his reason against himself, and studies how to be as miserable as his mind can make him? We need not be so in love with grief as to create it to ourselves. Nature, as I said, knows how to mourn without our teaching. We had need think rather how to bear our natural troubles than how to lay more upon our shoulders.

But if we will make any opposition, we must begin before our passions are too strong. They are too powerful of themselves, and we must not let them gather more strength by our negligence. If we do not at the very first set ourselves in a posture of defence against them, they will seize upon our whole soul, and get every thing into their possession. As soon therefore as our grief stirs, we must strive to comfort ourselves, and not either help forward or suffer our grief. If we go and bewail our friends as much as we can, and think to cheer our souls afterward, we shall soon find that our souls are drowned with a flood, and that it will be a long time before it be soaked up. When we give the least leave to these passions, they will ask no leave of us afterward; but the soul will mourn like Rachel, and refuse to be comforted. As soon therefore as thou hearest of the death of thy friends, do not spend the time in bemoaning thyself, saying, Alas! what a friend have I lost! did ever any man part with such a person? where shall I find one comparable to him in wisdom, in love, in faithfulness, in all manner of sufficiencies to make a friend? Do not, I say, after this sort stand to aggravate thy grief; but instantly say, *Why should a living man complain, a man for the punishment of his*

sins[f]? why should I trouble and torment myself with my own thoughts? why should wind and tide run together? How many reasons have I to be contented! and spread them all before thy eyes, that they may dry up thy tears and cease thy sorrow. Labour, at least, that these thoughts may tread upon the heels of the other; and, as soon as may be, overtake them, and get the mastery of them. And so doing, thou wilt weep as much as is fit, but no more than thou oughtest. Nature will be satisfied, and thou thyself not ashamed. None will think that thou art not grieved, and thou wilt feel that thy heart is comforted.

SECT. III.

Which shows rather what might be said, than what is said in this present treatise for moderating our sorrow. But yet those examples which we have from others may move us to follow their rules, and so a brief touch is made upon them.

But what comforts are these (may some say) which you bring us? with what reasons will you assist us?

I suppose it will be of no great effect to answer, that the wisest persons have made their mourning short and moderate; because I have already named two both good and wise that were excessive. And therefore I must endeavour to make men thoroughly wise, and furnish them with such reasons as will not suffer them to be oppressed with their sorrows. Yet methinks it is observable, that the Egyptians mourned ten times as long as the children of Israel. Seven days ordinarily contented the people of God for their grief, (as you may see, Ecclus. xxii. 12, Job ii. 13), whereas they that were strangers to the God of Israel extended their mourning seventy days, as you may read, Gen. l. 3; yea the greatest mourning that the Israelites used for their two famous leaders, Moses and Aaron[g], was prolonged but to thirty days, which is not half the time that those heathens allowed. I think not fit neither to pass by the shortness of Abraham's grief for his dearest wife Sarah, who died, as some of the Jews conjecture, for very grief, when he was at mount Moriah, think-

The best and wisest persons have not mourned much.

[f] [Lam. iii. 39.] [g] Numb. xx. 29; Deut. xxxiv. 8.

ing that her son was offered. This they gather from that expression, *Abraham came to mourn for Sarah, and to weep for her*[h]. From whence it was that he *came* I have nothing to affirm, yet this note of theirs is considerable, that in the word לִבְכֹּתָהּ, *to weep for her*, there is a small Caph, כ זעירא, in the middle of great letters, which may very well show, they think, that his weeping was little and moderate, and not of the greatest size. That expression is likewise taken notice of by some, which follows in the next verse, *he stood up from before his dead;* as if it signified, that he turned his eyes from her, that so he might not be overcome with grief. We must not love to look on our losses; nor think that it becomes us to weep as long as we can. But we should learn, by the manners of God's people, to do all we can to make our mourning short. Yea, I might teach you from heathens themselves, if examples would do us any good. Lycurgus[i] ordained that none should weep above eleven days, and that they should make no funeral solemnities. Solon[k] likewise took them away, that so he might ease men of those howlings and lamentations which they used to make at their friends' interment. Augustus[l], as Seneca observes, though he lost all his children and nephews, and was fain to adopt an heir, yet he was so little moved at their death, that he constantly went to the senate, and neglected no public affairs. Pericles[m] likewise, having lost two sons of great hope within the compass of eight days, put on notwithstanding a white garment, and with a great constancy of mind went to deliberate about the necessities of the commonwealth. All stories are full of such great souls, that after they had conquered others, at last conquered themselves also. I know it will cure no man to tell him that his neighbour was cured; yet these examples do commend to us the remedies which they used, and give us hopes that our griefs are not incurable.

[h] Gen. xxiii. 2.

[i] Plutarch. in Lycurg. [cap. 27.]

[k] "Ανανδρα καὶ γυνακώδεα πάθη,— Plut. in Solon. [cap. 21.]

[l] [Consol. ad Marc. cap. 15.]

[m] [Plut. Consol. ad Apoll. p. 118.]

SECT. IV.

Which teaches us to consider what death is:—first, common; secondly, necessary; thirdly, good. And if we thought more of it, we should not be unwilling to part; neither doth the manner of parting make any considerable difference.

What it is that must ease us.

The cure of this distemper doth lie chiefly in a fulness of considerations, wherewithal our minds must be stored. Nothing can resist grief but a great mind; no mind can be great that is not big with truth; nothing can impregnate us with truth, but serious advice and consideration in ourselves; and therefore we must provide ourselves with sufficient antidotes that may be ready at hand when we have need of them. Our souls must be as an apothecary, and our hearts must be the ἀποθήκη, or shop where all medicines are in a readiness against any grief or malady that shall invade us. If we have our remedies to gather and to compound when our sickness comes, the mind will be so weak that it will not be able to make them. We have least power to consider when we are full of sorrow; our affections are ready to overlay our reasons, and therefore we must have our medicines made before, that then we may have nothing else to do, but only to take them. And we shall find that to have so much labour in it (our stomachs being squeamish and nauseating) that we shall clearly see we need have nothing else to do.

The first means is to consider what it is that we lament.

I. First then, let us seriously consider What is it that we grieve for? It is soon answered, that we mourn for the death of those that we love. For their death? What is that, I beseech you? Is death such a strange and unusual thing that we should take it heavily? Are your friends the first that ever died? Are you the only persons that God hath singled out to be left alone? Do you not see that every thing in the world can cause death? The wind, the lightning, the fire, the smoke, the dust of the earth, the water, our meat and drink, our own passions, our joy, our sorrow, and a thousand other things can bring us to our graves. Why then should it be lamented, as if it were some wonder at which all the world should be asto-

Death is an usual thing.

nished? Men fill the air with sighs, they beat the heavens with their groans, they clothe themselves with darkness, and they pour out floods as in a tempest. Why, what is the matter? Is the sun fallen from its orb? Are all the lights of heaven extinguished? are they carrying out the world's funeral? What is it then that causes this moan? A friend is dead. There is one man less in the world than there was. O wonderful! What a prodigy is this! One that was born to die is dead! It had been a wonder indeed if he had not died. Then we might have filled the earth with noises: then there had been some cause for a tumult: but now it is rather a wonder that men should make such a stir at an ordinary and common thing, than that a thing so common should happen unto them. One would rather look to see no tears, than no death; and we might more easily excuse their weeping not at all, than we can these doleful lamentations.

II. Is it not necessary that our friends should die? yea, it is so necessary, that it is a thing past, and cannot be recalled, when men weep most for it. If you can bring them back again with your tears, if there be any hopes that with the noise you make they should revive to comfort you, then you have leave to weep as much as you please. Is there any Elijah or Elisha that can stretch forth themselves upon them, and recover them to their warmth? Is there any Paul or Peter, or such great men, that can raise them from the dead? Go then, and entreat them for to pity you. Beat your breasts, tear your hair, break your sleep with sorrow, macerate yourselves with fasting, that they may take some compassion upon you. But if all this pains be lost, never put yourselves into it; but say, Why should I have my labour for my pains? And did not all those men die again that they raised? Were they made immortal here upon the earth? What good would it do you to have them called to life again, if they must again die? how would you be able to part with them then, if not now? What an uncomfortable life would you lead, out of fear every day to fall into the same sadness! How desolate would you be even in their company, unless you learnt not to be troubled nor distracted! And if that must be learnt, then let us learn it now, when it is as necessary as it would be then. Do you take it ill that the apple rots, and your trees decay,

Death is necessary.

and your clothes grow bare, and that any thing in this world is according to its nature? Why then do you bewail it with such passion that men die, which is as natural to them as it is to be born? Would you have God make the world anew for your sakes? will you not be contented unless he make a mortal thing immortal? Is it not sufficient that you know it must die, and that he gave it to you that it may be returned to him again? Did he ever promise you how long you should have it? may he not call for his own when he thinks good? Do not other men pay this debt to nature as well as you?

Seeing then it is both a common and a necessary debt, do not repine as if you did only pay it. He is an unworthy debtor that returns what is lent with a reproach to his creditor. And therefore give it up cheerfully; perhaps he may entrust you with something better. While David saw that his child was alive, he earnestly besought of God that it might not die; but when once it had given up the ghost, he anoints his head, and puts on other garments, because he knew God was not bound to work a miracle, though he might be inclined to show mercy[n]. While there was life there was some hope of mercy; but when it was dead there was no hope of a miracle.

And yet there is one thing that may be pertinently observed in that story of David, which exceedingly argues our folly. Though God had said by a prophet that his child should die, yet he earnestly begged that it might live. Men are not so earnest for that which they may be assured God will do if it concern their souls, as they are for that which they have all reason to fear he will not do if it concern their bodies. Men would have him recal his word, and alter his decrees in temporal matters; but they little mind the obtaining of his promises and the fulfilling of his word in spiritual concernments. They would have life as long as they please, which they know he will not bestow; but they seek not for contentment, which they may be assured he hath a mind to give. They would have him willing to let them enjoy their friends always, which cannot be; but they seek not to him that they may be willing to part with them, though they must part with them, and he would make them willing.

[n] 2 Sam. xii. 16, 20.

For shame let us not continue in this kind of folly, to be angry at things necessary, which we cannot avoid, and to neglect those necessaries which we cannot want.

Death is not only necessary, but good.

III. And since death is such a common thing, and so easy to be met with, that every thing in the world may bring it to us; let us further consider, that it cannot be very hurtful in itself; for all such things are more unusual and rare. God is not so unkind unto the world as to let the most noxious and poisonous things grow every where in the greatest plenty. Things of that nature are but thinly scattered through the world; they lie hid, and dare not commonly appear. Since death, therefore, is in every thing; since it lurks not for us like a serpent in the grass, but the smallest thing in the world may strike us with it; let us verily persuade ourselves that there is no such great harm in it as we imagine, especially considering that there is another life.

I am sure that some as wise as we that mourn so much have thought that death was the best thing that befalls the sons of men; and if we do not think so, it is because we think not of death itself. It is a common story, which Pindar was first author of, how that Agamedes and Trophonius, having built the temple of Apollo, asked a reward of that god for their service[o]. He promised that after seven days he would pay them well for their pains; at the end of which they both died in the midst of a sleep. This the world believed was a lesson to them, that God could do men no greater favour than to take them out of the miseries of life. Not long after this Pindar himself exemplified the same truth that he had taught; for when by the ambassadors of Bœotia he asked the oracle what was the very best thing that could befall men, the answer was, that Pindar knew well enough, if he did not lie when he wrote the story of Agamedes; but if he doubted, he should shortly know what it was. This he interpreted to signify his death, which within a few days after happened[p].

But perhaps we are not of this mind; and I need not go to an oracle to know the reason, which is plainly this; we are acquainted with no other life but this. If the world had not

[o] Plutarch. ad Apollon. [p. 109.]
[p] Vid. etiam Suidam in voc. Πίνδαρ. [col. 2989 A.]

so much of our hearts, we should not find any fault with the necessity of death, because it would become desirable. We should not then be so sorry for our friends' departure as for our own stay. We should be glad that neither they nor we were necessitated to dwell there always, where there are so many troubles, that he is happiest who is soonest freed from them.

But there were many that thought not much of the goodness of death, who yet were comforted with the bare thoughts of necessity. How many heathens might I tell you of who fled to this one truth for refuge, and found protection under it against the assaults of sorrow: Nothing is happened to me but what happeneth to all. The first minute that we began to live we began to die. This is not the first, but the last moment of death. It is now finished, but it was born when we were born.

When one came and told Anaxagoras in the midst of a lecture that his child was dead, "Hold thy peace," said he; "I knew that I begat a son that was mortal[q]," and so proceeded in his discourse, without any accents of grief, or a mournful tone. And so another said to his friend, when he saw him weeping for his wife, "I thought you had known that you married a woman, and not a goddess." Do but remember, then, what the thing is that thou lovest, and thou must be willing either to leave, or not to love it. As they used to stand behind them that triumphed, and to admonish them, You are but mortal men; so let us say to ourselves, when love is in its greatest flames, *Θνητὸν φιλῶ*, 'I love a dying person[r].' What hurt is there, while we embrace and kiss a child, to say, *Αὔριον ἀποθανῇ*, 'To-morrow it may die[s]?' and so to discourse with our friends,—To-morrow either you or I may go away, and never thus embrace any more. Doth it make our love the less? doth it make us avoid their presence? No; therefore we are so greedy of our friends' society, because we know not how long we may enjoy them. It makes love more fervently desirous to have all of them now, because it knows that it may have none of them ere it be long. It teaches us to use their friendship to the best

To think of their death doth not make our lives uncomfortable.

[q] [Plutarch. Consol. ad Apollon. p. 118. de Tranq. An. p. 474. Cf. Diog. Laërt. lib. ii. cap. 13.]

[r] Arrian. lib. iii. cap. 24. [p. 340.]

[s] [Ibid. p. 341. et apud Anton. lib. xi. § 34. p. 258.]

advantages we can, because we are not like to have the use of it as long as we please. The knowledge of our departure doth not part friends now, but makes them cleave the closer until they depart. Let us be willing they should die, and that will not abate our love; for we cannot be willing until we have loved them as much as we can. We shall be loath they should go without the best testimonies of our love, and that will make us only improve our time to have the benefit of them, and they of us. Seneca tells us, in one of his letters[t], that he who gave a great deal of good counsel to others not to grieve was himself almost made an example of one overcome with grief. "But the truth of it is (saith he), there was no other cause of that mourning, which I must now condemn, but only this; I did not use to think that my friend might die before me: I only had in my mind that he was younger, much younger than myself; whereas I ought to have added, What is this to the purpose? though he ought (I imagine) to die after me, yet he may die before me. Because I did not thus meditate, I received a stroke when I was unarmed which went to my heart. But now I think both that all things are mortal, and that there is no certain order of mortality. That which may be at all may be to-day. And if you think that your friend may die to-day, then why do you not begin to mourn, since his death is at hand, unless you mean to take it patiently when it comes? If you will lament the death of your friends so sadly, why do you not prepare your lamentations, seeing death may be so near? If you think it is not so near, then it is likely your sorrow will be violent when it comes, because sudden: if you think it is, and yet do not mourn, then why should you lament that so sadly at night, which you did not weep for at all at noon? There were some creatures, they say, in Pontus, whose life lasted but one day; they were born in the morning, and came to their full growth at noon, and grew old in the evening, and at night died[v]. If these animals had been masters of the reason that we have, would they have lamented after our fashion? would they have mourned for one that chanced to die at noon, whenas it could not live longer than night? No; that which is necessary, it is no great matter when it comes. And because we are of a longer life, our trouble at death is

[t] Epist. lxiii. [v] Plutarch. [Consol. ad Apollon. p. 111.]

not to be the greater, but the less; for it is a greater wonder that we did not die many days agone than that we die to-day.

The kind of death is not so considerable as death itself.

But some will say, that it is not death itself, but the kind of death that so troubles them: they could but have been contented if he had gone out of the world another way. But, I beseech you, do you know what will please yourselves? Can you tell what sort of death it is that would content you? Are there any that do not blame their hard fortune, and wail and mourn as if none were so miserable? Are not men equally troubled if one die of a fever, and another of a consumption, if their love be equal? It is very plain, that he that persuades himself to part with his friends will not grieve for the manner of the parting; he that can overcome himself in the greater cause of grief will not suffer the less so easily to overcome him. And therefore you see that men have always something to find fault withal. If a friend die in a far country, then they say, Alas! that we should not see him before he died! how sad it is that we should not take our leave! If he die at home, then they say, Who could endure to hear his groans? how sad was it to see him in the agonies of death! If he die and speak nothing, then they say, O if he might but have told us his mind, if he had left us any remembrances, it would have been some comfort. If he did speak, then they tell his speeches to every one, and say, O my sweet child, or friend, I shall never forget thy words! Would you have me put out of my mind his dying speeches? And so those sayings are a perpetual nourishment and food to their grief. If he die on a sudden, then they lament because he was snatched rather than went away. If he die of a lingering sickness, then they say he was nothing but skin and bone, a mere anatomy; never any creature endured so much as he did. And so they complain they know not for what; for they would not have had him gone away so soon, but spun out his life till he looked more ruefully. And indeed men never want some pretences for these complaints; but the true reason is, that they would not have had their friends to die at all[w]. [In what glass soever this potion had been presented, they would have swallowed it with the same disgust. And I must

[w] [The paragraphs which follow were added by the author in the later editions. They are distinguished by brackets.]

confess it is very bitter, yet we should not study to make it worse than it is; but by digesting such considerations as these, receive it with a better countenance and take it down more easily. But there is nothing which the vulgar so much dreads and even execrates (if I may use the word of Erasmus) as a sudden and unexpected death: nothing which they so frequently and vehemently deprecate as this evil. Which makes me think it necessary to apply a particular salve to this sore: and I can find none better than that which that admirable person hath made to my hand, compounded with a grateful mixture of other profitable things. "You would do well to consider," says he to Jodocus Gravirus[u], "that a sudden death is equally common to good and bad. Therefore it is horrible indeed to die ill, but not to die suddenly. Yet the superstitious fear of mortals invents to itself vain preservatives against it: the image of St. Christopher, certain little prayers to the virgin-mother, with certain words and characters not unlike to magical charms. They that are in such dread of sudden death, how much better were it for them if they did beg of Heaven a good life! For what more foolish than to defer the amendment of our life till we come to die? How few are there, if any at all, who are amended by a long sickness! We ought to despair of none; but he learns Christianity late who hath no time left to practise what he learns. The remedy of confessions comes late when the soul is just on the brim of the lips.

"Grant me, say they, true contrition and a pure confession before I die: and this they sometimes ask of St. Barbara, or St. Erasmus. I beseech you, what is this but to say, Let me have leave to live ill, and grant that I may die well? They would not hate their sins till the hour of death, but desire to enjoy them as long as they have their health. Otherwise they would say to Christ, not to Barbara, Grant me now hatred of all sin; grant me saving contrition for those I have committed; grant that the remembrance of them may be always bitter to me; grant me while I am well so to confess once, that hereafter I may have no more need of confession.

"But there are some who are so bold as to tell God by name

[u] Lib. xxiii. Epist. 5. [al. Epist. 621. tom. iii. col. 785.]

what kind of death they desire to die of, and how many months they would lie sick. How much more like Christians would it be to take care of nothing, but so to order our lives that our last day may not surprise us unprepared, and to leave the rest to the will of God! He knows what is fittest for every one. There is one way of coming into the world, but a wonderful variety of going out. Let him choose which he pleases. That man cannot die ill who lived well. But if it were lawful for a pious man to choose what death he would die of, I think there is none more desirable than a sudden one, which in the midst of his course of well-doing should hastily snatch him away to heaven. When he is sick, and must, whether he will or no, take care of his feeble body, how much time is lost from the offices of piety! He cannot study, he cannot instruct, he cannot preach, he cannot visit the sick, he cannot labour with his hands, that he may have wherewith to relieve the poor; but rather he is a burden to those whom charity would not have him trouble. A good man is so far from being willing to be troublesome to any while he lives, that he would gladly not be troublesome to them when he dies. I have heard of a pious friar, who perceiving his spirits languish, and thence apprehending some approaching sickness, was wont to say among his friends, Would to God, if it seem good to him, he would take me away suddenly, lest by a tedious sickness I become grievous to my brethren. He had what he desired. For the day that he died he preached twice, gave the communion, sat down to dinner, at the end of which he begged their excuse, and went into his cell to take some rest. There he was found a little after dead upon his bed, but more like a man asleep. Who would not think this death more happy than a long sickness? 'But he wanted the sacred ceremonies.' True, and so did the eunuch's baptism, I suppose, want those which are now in use; and yet it was not worse than ours. 'But it is a sad thing to die alone.' Why so? The presence of one single angel is sufficient to transport the soul to heaven. Sometimes indeed there are those present who can comfort a dying man; but more frequently there are those that add to their trouble."

It would be too long to set down all the examples he brings, both ancient and modern, of good men who have had a sudden passage to another life. I shall only ask, why that should be

dreaded so much which God hath seemed to grant as a favour to many; whom he hath taken away (as Erasmus there writes) either as they were reading divine service, or when they were preaching, or intent in meditation of celestial things? Let it be but our business to order our life as we ought, and there will be no cause to stand in fear of sudden death. And if we see those posted away who were not so careful as they should have been to live well, let it be a warning to us to prepare ourselves the more carefully, and to exhort others not to put off so necessary a business till the last. It is too late to be concerned for those who are gone; let us fear rather for those that remain: fear, I mean, lest they should die in their sins, but not lest they should die suddenly; which many good men have desired, and others as good have endured.

But it is time to dismiss this particular cause of grief; for the cure of which, as well as others of the like kind, let us proceed further and weigh what follows.]

SECT. V.

Which contains comforts against the loss of children, parents, consorts, friends, upon a due consideration what every one of them is.

We must consider who the persons are that die.

Let us consider well who it is for whom we make our lamentations. Who is it, I say, that death hath taken away from us? Perhaps it is an infant, a poor little weakling newly crept into the light. And this hath the least of wonder in it of all other things, that such a little spark of life should be blown out. A greater wonder it is that it was not strangled in the gate of the womb. A little while ago it had no life, and it is now but as it then was. We were once content without it, why cannot we be content without it now? It never loved us, nor was capable to show any affection to us, and therefore we may the better part with it. It was scarce tied to our heart, and therefore it need not make the strings crack. It was not unwilling to go out of the world, and if it had lived longer, death would have been more against its will. It hath lost no great matter, for it knew not

Comforts against the loss of children.

the benefits of life. It hath cost us nothing, or we have been but at a small charge about it, and therefore our loss is not so great neither as we make it. If it could have known the miseries of living, and it had been put to its choice, very likely it would not have chosen to live, but to be what now it is. It hath not blotted its soul by any sin, nor deflowered the virgin purity wherein it was born. If it have any thing to complain of, it is only this, that it was born. And therefore let us be content; for it is better perhaps for it, and not much the worse for us. If we weep so much for an infant, what shall we do for a man? Either let us now let down the sluice, or else expect that we shall then be drowned. If it had lived to be a man, it might have done as we do, miserably bewail the death of its children. And therefore either let us not thus bewail it, or else think it happy that it lived not to be so miserable as we think ourselves; and both ways our grief will be cured.

Unreasonable to mourn for one when we have more.

But suppose it be a child of a larger growth, whose death extorts these tears from us. Yet it is but one, and we have many more remaining. Shall we lose all the content of a great many, because we suffer the want of one? If the life of this one would have pleased us so much, then how joyful should we be in the life of four or five! If it be such a grief to lose a child, then let us be thankful that we lie not under the miserable grief of losing them all. But if we cannot take this patiently, then I doubt we shall run mad with impatience if God should take them all away. We must learn to part with more, by parting willingly with this one; for all must die too. Can he bear a stone weight, who cannot endure the load of one pound? and yet how justly may we fear that all the rest should shortly follow, seeing we fret so much at God's hand in this! Suppose that this was the most goodly child, yet not fairer sure than all the rest put together. Or if he was most beautiful, yet some of the others may be more wise. If this had all our love, then we may learn now how to divide our love equally, and take pleasure in loving more. If he loved us most, then he would have wished us (if he had thought of it) not to make ourselves miserable by mourning for him. So Charidemus said to his friends when he was a-dying[x]: It is God's will that I should die, and there can no-

[x] Dion. Chrys. orat. 30. [tom. i. p. 549.]

thing that is hurtful come from him: I am very willing to die, and I beseech you believe me in what I say, for I have a greater care to speak truth now than any of you can have. Grieve not for me, for I grieve not; do not make yourselves miserable, for I think not myself to be so. Καὶ καθόσον οἷοί τε ἔστε μὴ συγχωρεῖτε τῇ ἀλγηδόνι, 'as much as ever you are able refrain from all sadness, for no sad thing hath befallen me.' Thus we should say to our friends, if we love them; and therefore their love to us should not make us sad, because they would have all they love to be cheerful. If they could tell us their mind, they would certainly bid us cease our mourning; and therefore let us end it of our own accord. Let there be such an harmony still between us in our wills and desires, that we may not be wailing and lamenting, when they are wishing we may be comforted.

Or when we may have more.

But let it be supposed that it is an only child; yet are there not many hopes that you may have more? Who gave you this? cannot he give you another? hath not he that hath the keys of the grave, the keys of the womb also? If one die, then as long as the world lasts, another shall be born. And if we desire children for the good of the world, then, so they be born, it is no matter by whom. But if for our sake, then we may have them as well as others; though perpetual grief and sadness, you may be sure, is not the way to procure them. Or if God will give us none, then we may adopt one. Any child will love us, as if it were our own, if it know not that it is any body's else. Nay, any one will love and serve us for what we have, and instead of one, we shall have many that will thank us (more than he perhaps) to be our heirs: but if we have nothing, then why should we desire children for to leave them miserable? But as I said, why should we not hope for more, and those better than him we lost? With this hope David *comforted Bathsheba his wife*[z], who bare a Jedidiah, a man beloved of the Lord. If we count it such a strange thing to die, then it should seem it is an ordinary thing to live, and so why should we not expect the new life of another? But if it be no strange thing to die, then (as I have said already) we may well be comforted. Or if we should have no more, yet this may be some comfort, that then we shall have no

[z] 2 Sam. xii. 24.

more to mourn thus sadly for. Yea, suppose thou art the last of thy family and name, (as was the great Scaliger, and Lipsius also, another excellent scholar,) it is no great matter, seeing the world is not to last long. If thy name must have an end, what needest thou to trouble thyself when it ends? And if men can think it no harm to suffer their name to die of itself, (as Scaliger did, who would not marry,) why shouldst thou be troubled if thine perish, after due care to preserve and uphold it?

Or when it is uncertain whether they or none at all be better.

But then, if thou hadst never so many children, yet who knows how they may prove? If they should be bad, then thou thyself wilt say, that it had been better they had never been. They that thou mournest for, because they are dead, might have given thee greater cause of mourning if they had lived. If the death of a child be sad, his wickedness would have been far sadder; for that is a worser death. He that dies doth trouble his parents but once; but he that is bad is a perpetual torment to them. He that is dead cannot indeed help his parents, but then he doth not hurt them, as many a bad one doth. For those that are dead we only grieve, we do not fear; but for those that are bad we fear perpetually, and we grieve also: yea, all the sorrow we now conceive at their death will not equal perhaps the mere fear which we should have had from their infancy, lest their life should prove bad.

It is said in the life of John the patriarch of Alexandria, that a merchant came to him to pray for a son of his that was at sea, that he might be safe. Within a month the child died, and his ship likewise was cast away. And when he was much troubled at this double loss, he thought one night that he saw the patriarch standing by his bed, and saying to him, "Thou desiredst me to pray that thy son might be safe; and behold now he is safe, for he is dead. If he had lived wickedly in his future course, then he could not have been safe." And besides their badness, suppose our children should have died of some infamous and base death: this would have troubled us more than death itself. Yea, some there have been that have sought their parents' death, and what a trouble would this have been! Some have slain their fathers, and others their mothers, and who was there left to mourn then? If you be affrighted at these strange supposals, (which sometimes have had a real truth,) yet

consider once more, that if they had not been bad, notwithstanding who knows what miseries they might have endured, worse than death? Can you tell what misfortunes might have befallen them, which might have made them wish they had died sooner? They are now dead, perhaps they have that which afterward they might have desired, and not so easily obtained. For how many and frequent occasions are there of sorrow here! To find a life without crosses, we must seek among them that last but from morn to night. And so great are the troubles and anguish which some endure, that their life is nothing else but a long continued death; which made one of the gymnosophists answer Alexander when he asked whether death or life was stronger,—"Life sure, for that bears the most evils[a]." And suppose he that is dead should not have been miserable; yet now he is gone, if he might rise again, it is likely he would not, lest he should know again the fear and the pains of dying.

[He is freed from the vanity and vexation of life, and from the terrors and agonies of death. He hath left the evils of this world, as well as the goods; and is out of a capacity of suffering, as well as of enjoying any thing here. "And is it a little that a vast number of mankind suffers? Listen to their complaints and lamentations every where, and it will put you in mind how happy he is, who now is not in danger so much as to hear them. Thou mayest understand from my calamity (says a great man to the French king's ambassador upon such an occasion[b]) how many of the blows of fortune thy son hath escaped by a timely death. To which nothing would have more exposed him than that which thou most valued; the greatness of his wit, and the little concern his mind had for his body. For these two above all other things are wont to stir up the envy of the multitude, as fire doth smoke. And from envy first comes contention, and then undeserved hatred; and by and by follow those things which I am not the first nor the last that shall suffer. But if my fortune be not bad enough to make one fear a longer life, conceive to thyself the wretched condition of others; who have broke their legs by falls, who groan

[a] [Plutarch. in Alex. cap. 64.]

[b] Hugo Grotius, Epist. ad Gallos. xci. [ad Benj. Aub. Maurerium, p. 196, sqq.]

under the wounds they have received in war, who have studied out their eyes, or in the torments of the stone not so much protract their life as their death. There are none of these things which may not befall anybody; except those only whom death hath placed in safety. Therefore, if ever the honours, the embassies, the fame he might have had, or any other thing which we rather fancy than can promise ourselves, come into thy mind; remember presently that those miserable things might have as well befallen him: and the rather, because in human life there are many evil things without good, but no good things without a mixture of evil.

"Therefore I would have thee imprint that of the Greek comedy very often in thy mind. 'If thou couldst know that the whole time he did not live would have been always fortunate, then indeed his death was too hasty; but if he was to spin out that time under grievous miseries, thou wouldst be reconciled, I suppose, to his death, and no longer quarrel with it.' But if the death of all Christians be to be received with thanks to God rather than with lamentations, surely that death is most of all to be welcomed which hath exempted an innocent age, untainted with this world's wickedness, not only from the danger of sicknesses and calamities, but, which is far greater, from the danger of being made bad. Therefore I would have thee frequently say to thyself, That good, that beautiful soul could no otherway secure me of it. There is nothing now I am to provide for it; I only owe a great many thanks to God for the use of it thus long. I have lost nothing by its death but what I wanted with an equal mind before it was born. And one thing I have gained by it, which still remains with me, a memory of those sweet things that I saw, those joyful things which were told me of it; for which I should be very ungrateful if I should return nothing to God but a long sadness of mind, that is, for good, nothing but evil."

After the same manner also I remember that great divine, St. Gregory Nazianzen, comforts his parents against the loss of his dear brother, Cæsarius[c]. "We are sad to think," saith he, "that Cæsarius shall rule and govern no more; but let us

[c] Orat. x. p. 172. edit. Paris. [Orat. vii. ed. Ben. § 20. tom. i. pp. 211, 212.]

consider withal that none shall hereafter domineer or tyrannize over him. None shall fear or stand in awe of him more; but he shall not fear neither the insolences of a grievous master, who is not worthy, perhaps, to be a servant. He shall heap up no more riches: no, nor shall he be envied by others, or tormented by his own desires of increasing wealth. Hippocrates, Galen, and all the rest he shall expound no more: but he shall not labour under diseases neither; no, nor bear the burden of other men's miseries. He shall demonstrate Euclid, Ptolemy, and Hero no more; but he shall not be vexed neither with the proud ignorance of empty people. Plato and Aristotle and Pyrrho, and all their fellows, can do him no more credit; nor shall he cast in his mind how to dissolve their little subtilties. What shall I remember more? Those high prized things, which are so greedily sought by all, wife and children, he shall have none; nor shall he mourn for them, or be lamented by them, either by leaving them to others, or being left himself a monument of calamity."

All this is true, may some say; my child is free from all the dangers and miseries of this life; but if you knew what a rare creature it was that I have lost, you would allow my continued complaints:—the heir of an illustrious house, the prop of his family, the hope of his country, the child of a thousand prayers, and that in the spring and flower of his age. What heart of adamant would not sympathise with one in this condition? I will answer you in the words of a great friend of the father now mentioned, who is ready to comply with your sorrows, if you will be but as forward to receive his consolations. "I confess," saith St. Basil, (in a letter of his to Nectarius[d] on this subject,) "that it is impossible to be insensible of your loss. There was nobody but wished, when he was alive, that they had such a son: and when he was dead, they wept for him as if he had been their own. Nay, if we would complain and abandon ourselves to weeping for this accident, the whole time of our life is not long enough for it. If all mankind would groan with us, they could not make a lamentation equal to this loss: no, though they should make a river with their

Some letters of the ancients on this subject.

[d] Epist. 188. [ed. Ben. Epist. 5. tom. iii. p. 77.]

tears. The sun himself, if he were sensible, would shrink at such a spectacle. But if we will let the gift of God, which he hath put into our hearts, interpose, that sober reason which sets a measure to our souls in prosperity, it will suggest many things which we have seen and heard to moderate us in these sad circumstances. It will tell us that this life is full of affliction, and that all places abound with examples of human calamities: but above all, that it is the command of God not to lament the dead in the faith of Christ, because of the hope of the resurrection; and that there are great crowns laid up for great patience. If we suffer reason to sing these things in our ears, we may find some moderate end of this evil. And therefore I exhort thee, as a generous combatant, to fortify thyself against the heaviness of this stroke, and not lie down under the weight of sorrow: being persuaded, that though the reasons of God's dispensations are out of our reach, yet we ought entirely to accept that which is ordered by one so wise and loving, although it be heavy and grievous to be borne. For he knows how to appoint to every one what is profitable, and why he hath set unequal terms to our life. The cause is incomprehensible by us, why some are carried away sooner, and others tarry longer in this toilsome and miserable life: so that we ought in all things to adore his loving-kindness, and not to take any thing ill at his hands; remembering the great and famous voice of Job, who, when he heard that his ten children were all struck dead in one moment, said, *The Lord gave, the Lord hath taken away: as it pleased the Lord, so it is come to pass.* Let us make this admirable language our own. They are rewarded with an equal recompense by the just Judge, who perform the same worthy actions. We are not robbed of a child, but only have restored him to the Leader; nor is his life extinct, but only translated to a better. The earth doth not cover our beloved, but heaven hath received him: let us tarry a while and we shall be in his company. The distance of time is but short between the arrival of several travellers to their inn: into which some are already turned, others are entering, and the rest are making great haste toward it; but they shall all come to one end. For though some perform the journey sooner, yet all are in the same road, and the same lodging expects them all."

Thus that holy man comforted Nectarius; and when he had done, he wrote the like consolatory letter to his wife: which is so full of good counsels, that I shall transcribe some of it. "Those things," saith he[e], "which befell us are not without providence, as the gospel teaches us: for there is not a sparrow that falls to the ground without the will of our Father. Why should we go about to resist his will, seeing by all our strife we cannot repair what is already done, but we may lose and ruin ourselves? Let us not condemn the just sentence of God. We are not wise enough to discern his secret judgments. Our Lord makes a trial of thee how much thou lovest him. Now is the time by patience to take thy portion with the martyrs. The mother of the Maccabees saw seven of her children put to death with miserable torments, and neither sighed nor shed ignoble tears; but she gave God thanks that she had any thing to offer to him. It is a great affliction, I confess, but there is a great reward for the patience. When thou wast made a mother, and broughtest forth a son, thou gavest God thanks; but didst thou not think then that, being mortal thyself, thou broughtest forth a mortal child? What is there strange then in this, that he who was mortal is now dead? He died, perhaps thou wilt say, before his time. How knowest thou that? He died in a very good time, for any thing thou canst tell; for it is beyond the compass of our understanding to choose that which is most profitable for souls, and set the bounds of human life."

Much more he adds to the same effect, which he repeats also in other letters on the like occasion[f]. But after this, which was last said, what need is there of any more? The most solid comforts are those which are derived from this humble submission to Almighty God, and entire resignation of ourselves to his incomprehensible wisdom. Concerning which a modern writer[g] hath spoken such excellent words, that I cannot forbear to translate them hither. "Our lives," saith he, "are not all alike: their length is measured by the will of him that giveth them. He gathereth the fruit while it is green;

[e] Epist. 189. [ed. Ben. Epist. 6. p. 79.]

[f] To Elpidius, Epist. 348. [ed. Ben. 206. p. 308.] and also 201. [ed. Ben. 300. p. 436.]

[g] Mouns. Malherbe. [Lettre 7. à M. de Termes, Œuvres, tom. iii. p. 45.]

he stays till it be ripe; and he lets it hang till it be rotten: whatsoever he doth, we owe this submission to our Creator, to believe he doth nothing unjustly. He doth no wrong, neither to them he takes away young, nor to them whom he suffers to grow old. But to ask why he doth things with such diversity, is to question that which we shall not be resolved of till we come to a place where there is a greater light: now we are in such a darkness as renders all our curiosities unprofitable. There are plummets to sound the deep abysses of the sea, but none for God's secrets. Believe me, and put this trouble out of your mind; it cannot stay there without diminution to your honour; and, which is more, (I must add) without disrespect to God." "We wonder perhaps," (to use the words of one of our own nation[h], which is no less fruitful of good discourses than any other,) "to see a man, who in a wood were left at his liberty to fell what trees he would, take only the crooked, and leave the straightest; but yet that man hath perhaps a ship to build, and not an house, and so hath use of that kind of timber. Let not us, who know that in our Father's house are many mansions, but yet have no model or design of that building, wonder at his taking in his materials: why he takes the young and leaves the old, or why the sickly overlive them who had better health .... This is the *will of God done in earth as it is in heaven*, when we neither pretermit his actions, nor resist them, nor yet pass them over in an inconsideration, as though God had no hand therein; nor go about to take them out of his hands, as though we could direct him to do them better."

I shall conclude this with some considerations of the same writer, in a letter to a friend of his that had lost her son. "We do but borrow children of God, to lend them to the world. And when I lend the world a daughter in marriage, or a son in any profession, the world doth not always pay me well again: my hopes are not always answered in that daughter, or that son. Of all that I lend to, the grave is my best paymaster. That shall restore me my child, where he and I shall have but one Father; and pay me my earth, when that earth shall be amber, a sweet perfume in the nostrils of his and

[h] Dr. Donne, Letter to a Lady in Mourning. [Letter 76. Works, vol. vi. p. 394.]

my Saviour. Since I am well content to send one son to the church, the other to the wars, why should I be loath to send one part of either son to heaven, and the other to the earth? Comfort yourself in this, my noble sister; but above all in this, that it is the declared will of God. In sickness and other worldly crosses there are anxieties and perplexities; we wish one thing to-day, in the behalf of a distressed child or friend, and another to-morrow, because God hath not yet declared his will. But when he hath done that by death, there is no room for any anxiety, for any perplexity, no, not for a wish; for we may not so much as pray for the dead. You know David made his child's sickness his Lent, but his death his Easter: he fasted till it was dead, but then he returned to his repast, because then he had a declaration of God's will. I am far from quenching in you, or discharging natural affections; but I know your easy apprehensions, and over-tenderness in this kind. And therefore since, in so numerous a family as yours, every year is like to present you with some such occasion of sorrow; I advise you in the office of a friend, and a brother, and priest of God, not only to take this patiently, as a declaration of God's present will; but catechistically, as an instruction for the future: and that God in this tells you he will do so again, in some other of your friends." For to take any one cross patiently, is but to forgive God for once; but to surrender one's self entirely to God, is to be ready for all that he shall be pleased to do.

These general antidotes being timely used will preserve us from fainting under any other evil of this nature; and I need not be solicitous to prescribe more particular remedies against them.] But if any expect I should, and tell me it is the death of their parents which they bewail; they that brought them into the world are themselves gone out of it: I desire to know of them what wonder there is in this. If our parents had not been to go out, what need would there have been of bringing us in? If they were designed to stay always, then there had been no room for us. They might more easily remember their mortality than we; for there is no act that puts us more in mind of death than that whereby we give another life. And it is but one of them, it is likely, that we have lost: we may

Considerations about the death of parents.

then love the other the more. Or if both, yet we have least reason to complain about their death of all others; for both nature and they themselves and we also would have them die before us. We complain that people die when they are young, and will we complain too when they die of old age? Then it seems we will have none die, and cannot be contented unless they live always. Would they have been willing to have been left childless without you? If not, then they have their choice to go first. Or are you so well in love with death, that it would have been more acceptable to you to have gone before? or so much in love with them, that on that account you had rather have died than they? Then know that your death would as much more have troubled them than theirs doth you: as the love of parents to their children transcends the love of all children unto them. It is very well then as it is. It is not handsome neither to complain when we are forty or fifty years of age that our parents are dead, for they could live no longer; or if they could, it would have been but a kind of death. If we will not cease to complain when we are of age, neither shall we ever cease when we grow older. For, as Cardan tells us, a poor woman once came to his door to beg an alms, and though she were seventy years of age, yet she used this argument in her complaints, that she was a poor fatherless and motherless creature, and had none to take any care of her. We need the less of their care when we can take care of ourselves.

But perhaps they die before we are of age and can take care of ourselves. Then we are least sensible of their loss; or if we are so considerate as to know that we may consider also such things as these; there is none fatherless that hath God for his father; and he that hath not would be little better for his earthly parents. If they were good, let us follow their example, and remember their counsel: if they were bad, they would not have been true parents to us; and it is well perhaps that we had not such an example to follow. They may live still in us, if they were good; if they were bad, we had need live the better, and spend those tears for their sins (which may entail curses on us) which we bestow upon them. But besides, it is observed by some, that the most eminent persons that have been in the world did lose their parents when they

were young; or else it is like they had not proved so eminent. The great Cæsar and his successor Augustus, Alexander the monarch of the world, Cicero the famous orator, Galen the most excellent physician, Aristotle the great philosopher, are all examples of this truth. If these had enjoyed the support of their parents to lean upon, they might not have tried their own sufficiency, nor exercised their abilities; or else they might have been wholly eclipsed by their lustre, and done nothing to be taken notice of in the world.

And of husband or wife.

But my loss, will some sorrowful creature say, is greater than all this: no less than half my self is gone from me. Death hath ravished an husband out of my bosom, and he the tenderest in the world. A sad case, I must confess; but it is well, since death is so common, that he hath left one half and not taken all.

Would he had! will that passionate soul reply: I cannot live in any joy now that the better part of me is dead and gone. O that I had never lived to see this day, or not out-lived it! Who can think of so wide a breach and not be ready to go out at it? But stay a little, I beseech you: did you never think of this before now? Did you not take one another with this clause "till death us do part?" Death and you ought to have been better acquainted before this time. It sought your acquaintance long ago, and would have been as familiar with you as your husband: who spoke of parting with you when you first came together; and now that you are parted, hath set you free again as you were before. If you like that state so well, you are at liberty to seek another self. If you do not like to be tied in such a yoke, why do you mourn thus for the gaining of your freedom? Or if you liked that person so well as not to be able to think of any other, then you may have the glory to stand among the rare and noble examples of conjugal love and friendship; who have preserved the image of their deceased husband or wife, so lively engraven in their hearts that nothing could ever displace it or blot it out.

[Alas! may some of the tenderer sex say, (whose hearts are commonly most deeply wounded with this affliction,) what a pitiful glory is this, and what a torment will it prove to me, to have only the image of such a person ever in my sight! It is not possible to keep myself from being in pain and anguish,

when I feel that he is torn from me. Since God hath made man and wife not to be two but one flesh, how can I take this separation otherwise than as if my body were cut in sunder? In such language I remember St. Basil represents the complaints of a desolate widow: and, if you please, hear his answer, in a letter to the wife of Arinthæus[i]; some part or other of which may help perhaps to compose the spirits of such persons, whom I cannot but pity above all other, and make them conceive some joy, when they look upon the image of what they have lost. And if you meet with some things in it that have been said already, do not therefore skip it over hastily; for second thoughts of a good thing are better than the first, and the same thing in a new dress may meet with those affections which it did not excite before.

"There is none," saith he, "that doth not sigh for such a man. Who can be so stony-hearted as not to shed a tear for him? Yet let us not complain that we are deprived of him, but give thanks to God who joined you together, that you have lived so long with him. To be bereaved of an husband is common to you with all other women: but to dwell with such an one, it may be questioned whether any can glory in the like happiness. For, to say the truth, God who made us all created this man as an example of human nature: so that all eyes were turned towards him, all tongues praised him; and many could not believe Arinthæus to be dead when they heard the sad tidings of it. But he hath suffered only that which shall one day befall the heavens, the earth, and the sun itself. He died also in his full splendour: and by his happiness in this world did not forfeit that of the next. Translate therefore thy mind from things present to the care of those that are to come: so that thou mayest be worthy by good works to enter into the same place of rest and repose. Spare thy aged mother: spare thy young daughter: who have no other comforter left but thyself. Be an example of courage to the rest of womenkind; and so moderate thy passions, that thine heart may not fail thee, nor thou mayest not be swallowed up of grief. And above all things look to the great reward of patience, which is promised by our Lord Jesus Christ, in recompense of what we

[i] Epist. 168. [ed. Ben. Epist. 269. tom. iii. pp. 415, 6.]

do here." "Do not think (as he adds in another epistle to her[k]) that any affliction idly befalls the servants of God, who are under his special care, but for a proof of their sincere love to our Creator. For as great labours bring the athletæ to their crowns, so are Christians by these trials brought to perfection, if they receive with a becoming patience and all thanksgiving whatsoever is ordered by our Lord. And there is nothing, I assure you, but is administered by the goodness of our Master: and therefore ought not to be received as grievous, though for the present it hurt our weakness. For though we know not the reasons by which every thing is done, as good, by our Master, yet this we ought to persuade ourselves, that what hath happened was profitable, either for us, because of the reward of patience, or for the soul departed, that it might not be further engaged in a world so full of wickedness."

These were the arguments whereby he comforted other persons as well as her: as appears by his letter to the wife of Brison[l]; to whom he adds these words: "Let thy children be as so many lively pictures of him to comfort thee in his absence. Let thy thoughtfulness and care about their education draw aside thy mind from these sad reflections. And by a constant solicitude to please God the rest of thy life, thou wilt get an excellent ease and quiet to thy afflicted thoughts. For a preparation for our defence before Jesus Christ, and to study to be found among those that love him, will be sufficient to obliterate all our sorrow, so that we shall not be swallowed up in it."

The same he writes to one that had lost an excellent wife; a person so fit for him, that they might see themselves in each other as in a glass[m]. "But why should we contend with such a law of God as is past so many ages ago? We are not the first nor the only persons that suffer on this fashion. It is a common thing for all to die, though to have a good wife is peculiar to few, whom God blesses. The truth is, to grieve for a separation from a wife is one of the gifts of God: for I have

[k] Epist. 202. [ed. Ben. 101. p. 197. The MSS. however afford no authority for inscribing this letter to the same individual as the former, as the Benedictine editor has remarked.]

[l] Epist. 347. [ed. Ben. Epist. 302. p. 439 D.]

[m] Epist. 346. [ed. Ben. Epist. 301. p. 437 E.]

known many that have parted with them just as if they had thrown off a burden."

The rest I shall not recite, because I would leave some room for a long discourse of another great person[n], addressed to disconsolate widows: the sense whereof is this. I have lost (saith some sad soul) not only my companion, but my guide, my stay, my shield, my second self. I doubt not of the resurrection which St. Paul treats of; but what shall I do in the meantime? Much business I have to manage, but I am become only a fit prey for every cormorant who hath a mind to be unjust. The servants who before reverenced me will now despise a silly woman. If my husband ever obliged any body, alas! it will be soon forgot, now that he can do them no further kindness: but if he did them any wrong, they will be sure to take a severe revenge on me, who am not able to resist them. This is the thing that breeds me all my anguish: set this aside, and his death would not give me such a torment. What shall we answer (saith St. Chrysostom) unto this? "Truly I could easily demonstrate, that not what they pretend, but an unreasonable passion, is the cause of words so sad and doleful. If this were the cause of their lamentation, then they must never cease thus to bewail themselves. But if after a year's time all these tears are dried up, it is certain the want of their defence and comfort (which will then be most felt) is not the only cause of them. But let it be supposed that this is the fountain of all their sorrow; yet consider how much infidelity there is in it, that we should think it was they who took the care and patronage of us, not God. It cannot choose but provoke his displeasure, to see a creature of his more beloved than himself: and therefore, perhaps, he took away thy husband, because he was more to thee than thy God. The only One of Israel is very jealous, and cannot endure to be so slighted, that other things should have so much of our affections as his excellent goodness: which is therefore to be beloved by us as above all things, because it expresses a love to us above all other creatures. What was the reason, I beseech you, that widowhood and orphanage were so rare in the old times among good people? Why did Abraham and his Sarah, and Isaac live till a great old age? Truly I think it was because Abraham

[n] St. Chrysostom upon 1 Thess. Hom. 6. [tom. xi. pp. 468 sqq.]

loved God more than either of them: and when God did but say to him, Kill thy son, he went about it as readily as if he had been to sacrifice a lamb. But we are heavy and dull: we are carried so headlong into the embraces of creatures, that God is fain even against our wills to draw our affections to himself, by drawing them away from us. Do but love God more than thy husband, and I will undertake that either thou shalt not fall into widowhood, or shalt not feel it so great a mischief when thou fallest into it. And I have a good ground for what I avouch: for thou hast him for thy husband and thy defence that never dies, and that loves thee infinitely more than any man can do. And if this reason be not sufficient to convince thee, I have a comparison that will do the business. Tell me; if thou hadst a husband who loved thee so much as if he had no soul but thine, one that was as much beloved of others as he loved thee; one so wise and discreet, that he was as much admired as loved; one so gentle and compliant as if he was but wax to thy impressions; one that made thee shine as the moon doth with the rays of the sun: and suppose thou hadst a child by this dear person, who dies before he comes of age, wouldst thou be miserably tormented and overwhelmed with sorrow and grief for the death of this child while thou didst enjoy such a better love? No, in no wise. He that is so fair and beautiful in thine eyes would supply the want of it, as the sun doth the absence of the stars. He that is now loved and esteemed would quite obscure and hide all the other excellencies. Do but love God then more than this husband, and his glory, which puts out the lustre of all other things, will make thee as little troubled at his death as in the other case thou wouldst be for thy child's. Nay, far less, one would in reason think; inasmuch as God is infinitely more above that husband than he above the child.

"Besides, what is it which thou receivest from thy husband that is comparable to what the love of God gives thee? Are they not pangs and labours, and, as the world goes, unkind words perhaps, and angry chidings? Or if thou canst tell me of better things, what are they? What are fine clothes and jewels, and honours, and such like things, to the Son of God; to the brotherhood and adoption; to the kingdom and eternal glory; to the life of God and co-heirship with the Only Be-

gotten? Wilt thou after all this tell me thou canst not but be passionately troubled for thy husband's loss? Methinks thou shouldst consider, that if thou wantest him, thou hast God. If thou wantest thy menial servants and attendants, thou hast the guard of spiritual powers; the dominions and principalities of heaven are thy ministers. If thou sayest thy children want a father, that cannot be, seeing God is the father to the fatherless. If thou fearest they shall want necessaries, tell thyself who gave them to thee, and whether the life be not more than meat, and the body than raiment. Or if thou fearest they shall not be so well provided for as otherwise they might have been, how many could I tell thee of that have been bred by widows, and proved famous! and on the other side, how many that have had fathers, and been good for nothing! Put the fear of God in their hearts, and this will preserve them more than a father. When the guard is set within, they will less need one without. This will be better than riches, and glory, and promotion to them: this will make them famous both upon earth and in heaven.

"Do not set thine eyes then on the youth, who by reason of his father's greatness is girded with a golden belt, and rides on a prancing horse, and is taken into king's courts, and hath many tutors and governors following him at the heels: but cast thine eye above, open the gate of heaven by thy thoughts, look into that stately palace, behold the King of glory there sitting on his throne; and if he whom thou admirest on earth can be sooner admitted thither than thy child, fetch a great sigh, fill the heavens with noise and clamour; I do not forbid thy lamentations. But seeing neither riches nor birth, nor any thing else is there preferred, but only virtue and goodness, judge what reason thou hast to be content; and think how certain it is that nothing can make us dismally sad, ἂν θέλωμεν φιλοσοφεῖν, 'if we will not be fools, but philosophers.'

"And for thyself, if thou complainest of being desolate and solitary, remember what the apostle saith, 1 Tim. v. 5, that such an one *trusteth in God*. This is only an opportunity to enjoy more of the chiefest good. Thou hast more time and liberty to please God, now that thou hast none else to please. Thou art freed from all other bonds, to be tied faster to him. There are no chains, no restraints upon thee, to keep thee from doing

what thou wouldst. Thou art separated from one husband to be united to a better. Thou hast not the fellow-servant, but thou hast the Master. Thou hast not thy husband to talk with thee, but God is thy husband. When thou prayest, dost not thou talk with God? when thou readest, doth not God talk with thee? And what doth he say to thee? Words more desirable, more sweet than can drop from any husband's lips. If he speak never so kindly, the matter is not great; for he is but a fellow-servant. When the Lord himself will be pleased to embrace and speak lovingly to his handmaid, *τότε πολλὴ ἡ θεραπεία*, 'this is a strange piece of service.' And observe, I beseech you, how he serves and waits upon us: hear in what words he bespeaks our affections; *Come unto me, all you that are weary and heavy laden, and you shall find rest to your souls*[l]. And again by the prophet he cries, *Can a woman forget her sucking child, that she should not have compassion on the son of her womb? Yea, she may forget, yet I will not forget thee*[m]. What charms are there in these words! And what can have more of honey in them than those expressions in the Song of Songs[n], *My love, my dove, my fair one, my paradise*, &c.? And yet this is the language of God to men. If we will not rest satisfied in so tender a kindness, there is no remedy but we must be miserable."

To this purpose writes that excellent person, with an elegance which, though I could not imitate, yet I could not but follow, till I have run beyond the bounds within which I intended to confine this discourse. And yet the minds of such persons as I am now treating withal are many times so clouded by their sorrow, that it will be charity to try all other means to brighten and clear them. I shall recommend therefore to them, before I take leave of this argument, the advice of a great man in a neighbouring country not many years ago[o], sent to a lady oppressed with an obstinate grief for the loss of a dear husband. His words are to this sense: "Come to yourself again, madam, and think what you are a doing. You drive away and estrange from you that very thing which you love above all the world, and may enjoy continually, if you please.

[l] [Matt. xi. 28, 29.] [m] [Is. xlix. 15.] [n] [Cant. v. 2.]

[o] Mouns. du Vair. [This letter is not included in the edition of the works of Du Vair, published at Paris, fol. 1619.]

For where, I pray you, do you think that is which you so much cherished and loved? You will answer me, In heaven; and so it is, I make no question, full of joy and content among the blessed: but withal you believe that things above are so separated from us, that they can be no more rejoined to us as long as we live. Oh how much are you deceived! God himself, who is the highest and furthest from our natures, is continually in us, to give us unspeakable joy from his presence, if our souls be fit to harbour and entertain him. The holy angels are continually about us, if we take care to draw them to us; and how do we know that blessed souls, in whom the faith of a holy love could never die, would not come to visit us, if we made ourselves fit to receive them, and they found nothing in us contrary to their nature and happiness, which hindered us from going towards them? and what greater obstacle can there be unto it than tears and sorrow? The wings that must carry us up thither are our thoughts, which, animated by our desires and the ardours of a holy friendship, must never cease beating till they raise us up to that which we look for. And what do our tears but wet the wings of our thoughts, and hinder the flight of them? Do you not see that among the vapours which arise from the earth, those which proceed from rivers and marshes, and other moist places, stop in the middle region of the air, and, melting there, return from whence they came? whereas those which come from drier matters, soar up higher, till, being inflamed, they turn into comets and other celestial fires. Do you believe, in like manner, that your thoughts, though never so pious, can never mount high, if they be clogged and wet with abundant tears. Let them be heated by the sacred flame of your holy friendship, and purified from worldly contagion; and, taking their flight through a calm and undisturbed spirit, as through a clear and bright air, you will questionless overtake that which is fled from you, and embrace that blessed soul, and grasp the splendour of that eternal light wherewith it is clothed. And you will find it as if it consented to your desires, coming down again all along your thoughts as by a thread, giving you a more perfect rejoicing therein than can be imagined. It will dwell in you (at least by the lively image of your vehement thought), and seem as if it were yourself. For we find that in corporeal things a violent imagination

makes us believe we see and touch that which is furthest from us. Try, madam, that which I say, and you will find it most true. Make use of this troublesome grief, which you cannot be rid of, to spur your desires to be rejoined to that at the loss of which you so much repine." Thus he.

To which, methinks, I hear some reply, that this way is too sublime for their spirits: they cannot mount themselves on this fashion, but cleave fast to these terrestrial objects. It may be so; and all that I can say to such is this, that next to God and our blessed Saviour, whom they apprehend, I hope, every where, to take care of those that commit themselves to the fatherly providence of the most supreme reason, they should entertain themselves in the company and embraces of their remaining friends, whose presence is most delightful, and converse most comfortable. And all of them put together may make a sensible image of a dead husband.]

I know they will say, But these friends may die too, and then what shall I do? I have told you already, and therefore have the less to add on this subject. Yet I shall remember you of the words of Seneca[p] concerning the death of a friend; which are to this purpose. If thou hast other friends besides this, is it not a great reproach to them of their unworthiness, that all of them are not able to comfort thee for the loss of one? If thou hast no more, then thou hast done thyself a greater wrong than God hath done thee; for he hath taken but one, and thou hast made never an one. "God makes men (as is said by some), and we make friends." And if thou beest desirous of more, and findest such need of them, thou hast leisure now to go and seek them. He can never want friends that wants not virtue. He loveth not one well that cannot love any more than one. Is it not a ridiculous folly for a man to shrug and cry when he hath lost his coat, rather than go to fetch another garment to cover him from the cold? If he be taken away whom thou didst love, seek another whom to love: it is far better to repair thy loss than to mourn for it. And if thou canst not find another to thy mind, how couldst thou be a friend to him that is dead, if thou hast no power to help thyself? Why should not a good

Of the death of friends.

[p] Epist. 63.

man find enough in God and himself? The want of nothing can make thee want virtue; and he that hath that hath enough. Nay, every good man is thy friend, if thou beest good; and they that never saw thy face before, if they see thy goodness, will be good unto thee. *Bonos omnes oportet inter se amicos esse, etsi sint minus noti*[q]; 'All good men ought to be friends, though they be not much acquainted.'

I have passed over this last particular (as you see) very swiftly, because I observe my discourse swells to a greater bigness then I intended: and in some of the following considerations you shall find satisfaction to every one of these cases, if you will but concoct them.

SECT. VI.

Which directs how to quiet ourselves by comparing ourselves both with ourselves and with others; and there are five ways of comparison insisted on.

To compare ourselves with ourselves and others, a way to be contented. We were not so well once, or not better; and yet not so grieved.

CONSIDER so far as to make comparisons; and first of all compare thyself now with what thou once wast, yea, with what thou once wast not. There was a time when thou thyself wast not so much as dead, for thou wast not at all, nor hadst any capacity of joy or sorrow. Hath God dealt unkindly with thee in giving thee a being capable of both? Wouldst thou have refused a being (if we may suppose an offer to be made to nothing) unless he would have given thee nothing but joy, and never taken away what he gave thee? Unless thou hast a mind to be nothing, be contented with what thou art. Then thou hadst not these relations, for thou hadst not thyself. Why shouldst thou mourn now that thou hast them not, since thou hast thyself? Is there not more reason to be thankful for a being, though capable of mourning, than to be troubled at the occasion of it? Surely thou dost not desire to cease thy mourning by ceasing to be. Ease thyself then of thy grief by the being that God

[q] Apuleius de Philos. Mor. [lib. ii.]

hath given thee. If thou couldst not mourn then, do not mourn now. But then consider, that since thou hadst a being, there was a time when thou hadst none of these relations, no wife, nor children, nor friends which thou art deprived of. Yet thou didst not then weep and lament, and trouble thyself as now thou dost. Seeing thou art what thou wast, be contented as thou wast. What difference is there between that time and this? Thou wast as much without them then as now thou art; why shouldst thou not be as much contented now as then? All the difference between those that want a thing and those that lose it is only this; that they who lose it once had that which they that want it never had. Now shall we be the more troubled because we once had it? One would think that their trouble should be the greatest that neither have it nor ever had it. We have reason to be more pleased that we had it, if there were any good in it: and if there was none, then we have no reason to be displeased that we have it not. Say, hadst thou rather never have enjoyed thy friends than now be deprived of them? Was thy condition worse or better heretofore? If it was but equal to thy present, then thou hast reason to be equally pleased: remember how thou wast then, and be so now. If it was worse then, why shouldst thou be now worse troubled? If it were better then, why didst thou change it, seeing thou knewest that all must die? No question it is better to have enjoyed a good thing than never to have known it. And therefore, seeing thou art no worse now than thou wast once, but hast been better than once thou wast, be not more troubled than thou wast once, yea, be less troubled.

We may be worse.

But, secondly, compare thy present condition with what thou mayest be. This is not the worst that may befall thee in such a world of miseries. Suppose then that thou shouldst lose all thy children as Job did, and then lose thy whole estate; that the sea should swallow one part, and the fire burn another, and thieves rob thee of a third, and bad debtors quite undo thee. Suppose, after all this, that a fire should begin to burn in thy own bones, and that should break into boils, and they should break into scabs, and thou shouldst be poor, even to a proverb, as that holy man was: must thou not be contented then? But how is that possible, seeing thou canst not be contented now? If such a

shower of tears fall from thine eyes for this little loss, then sure thou wilt make a flood or a deluge. But what wilt thou do at last after all thy lamentations? Wilt thou kill thyself? Then it seems thou takest death to be the end of all troubles; and I wonder thou shouldst be so troubled at that which hath eased thy friend of them. Or what else wilt thou do? comfort thyself? Try how thou canst do that now; for if thy stomach refuse cordials in this distemper, never expect that it will digest them, when thou wilt be far more sick and apt to vomit them up again. If Job had cursed the day wherein he was born at the first breach that God made upon his estate, what expressions of grief (below a great sin) had he left for himself when he sat upon the dunghill? The good man took the first losses so patiently, that all the rest which befell him could not move him to greater impatience. Do thou remember him, and say to thy soul, Come, be quiet, this is not the worst that may betide us; we have no such cause to cry as we may have: let us learn patience against a time when we may have more need of it.

We may be better.

And then, if we should be brought to the very dust, and fall as low as the dung of the earth, yet there is another way of considering what may be besides this. We may be as happy again, as now we account ourselves miserable. Our sorrow may be turned into joy, as our joy hath been turned into sorrow. *Weeping may endure for a night, but joy may come in the morning*[q], according as I have said in the former discourse; and so it was with Job[r], whom God blessed in his latter end more than in his beginning. *We have seen the end of the Lord*, (saith the apostle James[s],) *that the Lord is very pitiful and of tender mercy.* But then this pity of his is to be obtained only by patience. If we cannot be contented, it is needful, we may think, that he should teach us it still by greater losses.

We have more than we want.

Thirdly, compare what thou hast lost with what thou hast not lost. God leaves commonly more than he takes. He takes away thy children perhaps, but thou hast thy husband, and he is better than ten sons. Or if thou hast lost thy husband also, yet thou hast

[q] [Psalm xxx. 5.] [r] Job xlii. 11. [s] James v. 11.

thyself; and *why should a living man complain?* And thou hast God himself, whom nothing can take away from thee. Or if thou hast him not, yet thou mayest have him; and who knows but that therefore thou hast lost thy friends because thou hast not him? God hath taken them away that thou mayest seek after him. Wouldst thou have been willing that all thou hast should have been lost rather than this one friend? Shall God raise him from the dead, all the rest go into his tomb? Wilt thou have all, or else take comfort in none? Then God may well take away all, and let thee have something to cry for. Yea, who is there destitute of all friends and comforters? Job himself was not so spoiled that they had robbed him of his friends. Though they did add indeed to his grief, yet it was their mistake and not their want of love. And if we should have no better, then we may give God thanks that he lets us see more than all our friends. Yea, it is a great mercy that God gives us time to cease our grief and trouble. And perhaps we have riches, and a pleasant dwelling, delightful walks, &c. Or if we have not, and can bear that patiently, then we may soon learn how to bear this. Do the poor people of Norway weep when they eat, because their bread is made of the barks of trees, and sometimes of chaff[t], not of corn as ours is? If there were no trees, nor chaff, nor any such thing to fill their mouths, they might well cry; but as long as we have what is needful, we should be content, for nothing is so needful as that. Let us not then weep because we have not so many friends as we had, for we have more than we deserve. Let us not mourn as though we were desolate when we want but one; no more than we complain of hunger when we have all variety of cheer except one dish that we love most. But,

We have more than many others.

Fourthly, let us compare ourselves (if you please) with others. In other cases this is a thing we love to do, though there be so much danger in it that it may undo us. If we be guilty of any fault, then we comfort ourselves in comparisons, and think that we are not so bad as others. Now that which we are apt to do when we do ill we ought to do when we think we suffer ill. Is

[t] Barthol. Cent. 4. Hist. An. cap. 16. [p. 249. 8vo. Hafniæ, 1657.]

God more unkind to us than to any of our neighbours? Do not we see that many of our neighbours' children are dead as well as ours? Many of them have lost four or five, and we have lost but one. Nay, many of them never had any, and yet they do not therefore mourn, and besmear their faces with tears, and break their hearts with sighs. Our case is the very same now that we have none, but only that it is a little better, because we had once some: and how thankful should we be that we had them so long, if it be desirable to have them at all! But then we may say further to ourselves, How many of them have lost their friends in the late wars! How many hath the sword made widows, and the blood of how many of their children hath it drunk! Ours were taken away by the hand of God, but theirs were taken away by the hands of men. Our friends died in their beds, and theirs died in the field: ours went, and theirs were driven, out of the world. Come, let us go comfort our neighbours that have lost more than we, for they stand more in need of comfort. If they stand in need of none, then no more do we.

It was very handsomely discoursed by Socrates, (as Plutarch relates[u],) that if we could all agree to put all the troubles and calamities of men into one heap, on this condition, that after every man had brought his and thrown them there, then they should all come again, and take every man an equal portion of them; there would be a great many that now complain, who would rather take up what they brought, and go their ways contented with them.

And so Antimachus, an ancient poet, when his wife died whom he loved exceedingly, he went and writ a poem bearing her name, wherein he reckoned up all the calamities that he could remember had befallen any in the world. By this means he did deter himself from grief; for how can one suffer the miseries which others endure, if he cannot bear this light one of his own?

Fifthly, let us compare ourselves with the ancient Christians. Their children were snatched out of their arms by the hands of tyrants. They saw their brains dashed out against the stones: their friends were buried in fires, or banished into strange places,

It is better with us than with those of former times.

[u] De Consol. ad Apollon. [p. 106.]

and they had no comforters left but God and themselves; and their chiefest comfort was, that they must shortly die the same death. But notwithstanding all this, and much more, they did not take it heavily, but εὐχαρίστως ἤνεγκαν (as Photius[x] speaks), 'they bare it all thankfully, and blessed God who could tell how to govern the world beyond all the thoughts of men.' Let not us who suffer but common things weep with an extraordinary sorrow, when they who suffered most unnatural deaths did bear it with more than natural courage. They might have been allowed to have wept blood, rather than we to shed tears. And yet they rejoiced as if their friends had been offered in sacrifice to God, and we weep as if they had been put to some shameful torments for their crimes. Shall we mourn more for the death of a friend than they for a butchery? What arguments had they to comfort them which we have not? What Scripture had they before their eyes to stay their tears which we read not? If either of us have more to comfort us than the other, it is we; for we have their most excellent example. And when I think of the mother of the seven brethren mentioned in the Maccabees[y], she calls my thoughts back a little further than the times of Christ. Did she wring her hands when she saw the skin of her son flayed off from his head? Did she cast any tears into the fire wherein another of them was fried? No, she speaks as cheerfully as if they were not stripping them of their skins, but clothing them with a royal robe: she looks upon them, not as if they lay upon a pan of coals, but in a bridal bed. She exhorted them, being filled with a courageous spirit, saying, *I cannot tell how you came into my womb, for I neither gave you breath, nor life, neither was it I that formed the members of every one of you. But doubtless the Creator of the world, who formed the generation of man, and found out the beginning of all things, will also of his own mercy give you breath and life again, as you now regard not your ownselves for his sake*[z]. This marvellous woman (as she is called ver. 20) knew very well that she did not give them life, and therefore why should she take so heavily their death? She considered they were none of hers, and why should not the Owner take them? She knew that she did not lose them, but only re-

[x] Epist. 234. [p. 349.] [y] 2 Macc. vii. [z] Ver. 21, 22.

store them; that life sometimes is not worth the having; that unless God will have us live, no wise man would desire to live; that none gives any thing unto God, though it be his own, but he gives them something better. And therefore she said, Die, my sons, for that is the way to live.

What poorness of spirit then is it, that we cannot see a soul put off her clothes without so much ado! that a Jewish woman could see seven souls torn out of their body with more courage than a Christian man can see one soul quietly depart and leave its lodging? I would wish every one to save his tears till some other time, when he may have some greater occasion for them. If he will weep much, let it be when he sees the bodies of his children or friends so mangled as theirs were. But if he would not weep out his eyes then, let him weep soberly, and not as if he were drunk with sorrow now.

SECT. VII.

Several reasons are given against immoderate sorrow, which are comprised in fourteen questions which we should make to ourselves. The reason and spirit of them you may see in the margin at the beginning of every particular.

IV. After we have taken this course with ourselves, we shall be the more prepared to hearken unto reason. And let us proceed from making comparisons, to ask ourselves some questions, and stay till they give a good answer. Let us know of ourselves why we are so sad and heavy. Let us speak to our souls, and say, Tell me what is the matter: what is the cause of all this grief? Thou art a rational creature, what reason hast thou for all this sorrow? Thou art not to be pitied merely for thy tears, if thou canst cry without any cause. Hideous things appear sometimes before us to affright us; but they are the chimeras of a childish imagination, and not things really existent. Let us bid fancy then to stand aside a while, and let reason speak what it is that so troubles us. Children cry who cannot speak, and we are not much troubled at it, because they cry for they know not what: unless we therefore can tell

We must think with what reason we weep.

why we weep, nobody will pity us, because it is not weeping that we are to mind, but the cause of men's weeping. Let me then propose these questions to be answered, some of which will discover that there is no cause of sad lamentations when our friends die. And if there be no cause that the fountain of tears should run, that is cause enough to stop it up.

No cause of mourning immoderately for their sakes who are dead.

I. For whose sake dost thou weep? for the sake of him that is dead, or for thy own? Not for him that is dead sure, for we suppose him to be happy. Is it reasonable to say, Ah me! what shall I do? I have lost a dear friend that shall eat and drink no more. Alas! he shall never hunger again, never be sick again, never be vexed and troubled, and, which is more, he shall never die again. Yet this is the frantic language of our tears, if we weep for the sake of him that is gone. Suppose thy friend should come to thee, and shake thee by the hand, and say, My good friend, why dost thou lament and afflict thy soul? I am gone to the Paradise of God, a sight most beautiful to be beheld, and more rare to be enjoyed. To that Paradise am I flown, where there is nothing but joy and triumph, nothing but friendship and endless love. There am I where the Head of us all is, and where we enjoy the light of his most blessed face. I would not live if I might again, no, not for the love of thee. I have no such affection to thy society (once most dear unto me) that I would exchange my present company to hold commerce with thee. But do thou rather come hither as soon as thou canst. And bid thy friends that they mourn not for thee when thou diest, unless they would wish thee to be miserable again. If we should have such a short converse with one of our acquaintance, what should we think? what should we say? Should we fall a mourning and crying again? Would it open a new sluice for our tears to flow out? Would we pray him to go to heaven no more, but stay with us? Would we entreat him to beg of God that he might come and comfort us? If not, then let us be well content, unless we can give a better reason for our immoderate tears than our love to him. Holcoth[z] reports of a learned man that was found dead in his study with a book be-

[z] In 4 Sap. v. 7. [p. 171.]

fore him: a friend of his was exceedingly amazed at this sight when he first came into the room: but when he looked a little further, he found his forefinger pointing at this place in the book of Wisdom[a], Δίκαιος ἐὰν φθάσῃ τελευτῆσαι, ἐν ἀναπαύσει ἔσται· *though the just be prevented with death, yet shall he be in rest;* and when he observed this, he was as much comforted as he was before dejected. We have no reason to lament them who are made immortal, and that live with God. If we respect them only, we should carry them forth as the Egyptians did the great prophet of Isis when he died, not with howlings and sorrow, but with hymns and joy, as being made an heir, πρὸς τῶν κρειττόνων[b], with our betters, and gone to possess most glorious things.

The truth of it is, if it were rational love to him that expresseth these tears, then we should not begin them so soon, nor make such a noise, and cry when men are a dying. For the sad countenances and the miserable lamentations, wherewith we encompass sick men's beds, make death seem more frightful to them than it is in itself. What misery am I fallen into (may a man think) that causes them to make such a moan! What is this death, that makes even them look so ghastly who are not like to die? What a mischief is it to leave so many sad hearts behind me, and to go myself (it should seem by them) to some sad and dismal place also! I tell you, a dying man had need have a double courage, to look both death and them in the faces, or else their indiscreet shrieks and lamentations will make a poor soul fall into such dark and cloudy thoughts. Men are fain therefore to say that it is indeed love to themselves that forces them thus to bemoan the death of their friends. But what are you, that cannot be contented one should be made much better, by making of you a little worse? Is this the great love you pretend to your friend, that you are extremely sorry he is gone to heaven? are you a friend, that look more at your own small benefit than at his great gain? was he not much beholden to you for your love, that would have had him live till you were dead, that he might have been as miserable in mourning for you as you think now yourselves to be? But what is it, I beseech you, that you thus bemoan yourselves for? Because that you are

Nor for our own sakes that are alive.

[a] Wisdom iv. 7. [b] Heliod. l. vii. Æthiop. [cap. 11. p. 275.]

now miserable? No, it seems that you are not miserable enough, and that makes you weep so much. If you had some greater trouble befallen you, that would put the lesser out of your mind. If you were sick or in pains, or had lost all your goods, these things could take your mind off from this loss; why then cannot the enjoyment of your health, and ease, and plenty do as much for you? When Joab did but threaten David[c] that they all would leave him, unless he would be comforted, then he could wipe his face, and appear in public as a man well pleased. Fear of losing his kingdom put away the grief for the loss of his son. And therefore let us not speak of our being forlorn and miserable by this loss; for at last we find it is not so. But how doth it appear that mere self-love is the original of these tears? Suppose this person to have been at so wide a distance from us for a year or two, that no tidings of him could come to us. Did we weep and lament all that while because he was not with us? Did not the thoughts that he lived, and hopes to see him again comfort us? And yet, was he not then in a manner dead, when we neither saw, nor felt, nor heard from him? What help did we receive from him at that distance; or wherein did he pleasure us? If we did not account ourselves so miserable all that time as to spend it in tears, we ought not to do it now. We are now as we were then: in all things the very same, save only in the knowledge that he is dead. But was he not dead, as I said, to us before? Was he not like a man in another world? What was there that he did for us, which we do not now receive at his hands? Let us be as quiet now as we would have been on such an occasion; especially since we know our friend still lives, and we have hope to see him again. Natural affection, I confess, in either case will make us big with sighs and burst forth often into tears. We feel we are not as we were before. There is something wanting which we formerly enjoyed. And it is an old acquaintance perhaps, which nature cannot but be loath to part withal. Get a new nature then, and that will mend all. [Though the first motions be so free that they owe no tribute to reason, yet when they come, we shall be careful not to follow them: if we do, it will not be very far. Religion and reason, if we hearken to them,

[c] 2 Sam. xix. 7.

will teach us to restrain ourselves. 'Religion (as a great person[d] speaks) will not suffer us to will what God wills: and reason will teach us to bear those things with an equal mind which do not happen to us alone, and which we cannot by all our tears make not to have happened.' They will not let us expect that time should take away this sickness from us. That is the remedy of vulgar spirits: *Sapientis est, tempus ipsum antevenire, et dolori ipsi nascenti occurrere*: 'it is the part of a wise man to outstrip time and get before it; to prevent a grief that is a growing, and strangle it in the very birth.' And indeed from hence we conclude that] it is not mere natural affection neither, to which we commonly owe our sadness and sorrows: but the freshness and presence of the cause of them. For time, as was said, will make us forget them; or if our parents had died a little after we were born, we should never have wept when we came of age, to think that they were departed. It is no hard matter then for a considerate person to cease his grief, seeing it depends upon such small causes. And if any one shall say that it is love to the good of the world that makes him mourn for the loss of an useful person, he hath reason to rejoice that he loves the good of men so much. For then he will labour to do much good in the world himself; and he will persuade all the friends he hath remaining, that they would do all the good they can, and repair that loss.

Our friends, if good, are not lost.

II. But let me further ask you. Was thy friend God's friend also, or was he not? If he was the friend of God, as well as a friend of thine, why should not he have his company rather than thou? If he was not God's friend, then he could not be thine neither. No man can love us aright that doth not love God, and if he do love God, why should we think much that he goes to God? But supposing he was very dear to us; then I say, that if he was bad, thou oughtest to have mourned for him before this: for then thy tears might have done some good, which now are altogether unprofitable. *Seven days* (saith the son of Sirach) *do men mourn for him that is dead; but for a fool, and an ungodly man, all the days of his life*[e]. But if he were a good man,

[d] Joseph Scalig. Epist. 139. ad Is. Casaubon. [p. 319, 20.]
[e] Ecclus. xxii. 12.

then thou needest not mourn now, for thou mayest hope to see him again, if thou art good. Thus thou mayest comfort thyself, My friend is not gone, but gone before. He is separated from us, but not lost. He is absent, but not dead. He hath taken a journey into a far country, and there I may go to see him. What matter is it whether my friend return to me, or I go to him? None but this, that if he be in a better place, then it is better that I go to see him, than that he come to see me. Should we not desire to be better ourselves, and not to have him made worse? Then let us contentedly follow as fast as we can, hoping there where he is to embrace again. We cannot expect him in our house, but he expects us in his. He cannot come down to us, but we may go up to him. He cannot come back, but we may follow after. And there is no difference (as I said) between his visiting of us at our home, and our going to see him at his, but only this, that it is a great deal better for us to see him there where he is, and not where we are now ourselves. Let us not mourn therefore for that which cannot be, but rejoice for that which may and will be. And let it comfort us that we shall come together again, but in a better place than we would have it; we shall have our desires fulfilled, but in a more excellent manner than we desire. And if in the mean time he can do us any good, we may be sure we shall not want it.

III. Ask yourselves again, Why should you mourn more for your loss than be glad for your enjoyment? If there be so much reason to lament the absence of this friend, then it should seem his enjoyment was very valuable. Think therefore of the sweetness thou hadst in that which thou wouldst purchase again with so many tears. Is there no comfort but only in things present? Is it not a piece of our folly to forget what we have enjoyed? Shall we only think what delight we have lost, and not of what we have had? We do not know whether we have lost any, but only that which we had; and that we may think of as much as if he were alive. Of what we have enjoyed we are certain, but there is no certainty of what we should have found in our friend for the time to come. Think then of the time past, and rejoice that thou didst find so sweet a friend. Imagine not how

As they are not lost, so we have had them long

long thou mightest have enjoyed him, but think how long thou didst. It was but natural to lose him; but it was supernatural to enjoy him. All men are born to die, but all men are not born to live so long before they die. All men have acquaintance, but all men have not friends. Therefore he that hath a friend, and hath him so long, is to acknowledge that God is very much his friend. He was not ours, but was given us by God; or rather, he was not given, but only lent. We had not the propriety, but only the use. We have not lost any thing that was our own, but only restored that which was another's. And therefore now that he is taken away, we are not to be angry that God requires his own, but to be thankful that he hath lent us so long that which was none of our own. And assure yourselves, there is nothing more unreasonable than to mourn that God gave us a thing no longer; and not to rejoice that he gave us that which is so desirable at all. Cease your tears, I beseech you, unless you will show that you deserved to have wept a little sooner. Either say that he was not worth the having, and then you need not weep at all; or else give God the thanks that you had a person so worthy, and that will stay your immoderate weeping.

Nay, will some passionate person say, but this will rather augment our grief, when we think that he was so much worth unto us, and yet is gone. But that is our fault, if we will think more and oftener that he is not than that he was. How can any body help you, if you will needs look more upon his departure than upon his stay? Seeing there is more reason that you should please yourself in what is past, it is to be supposed that your thoughts will be more upon it; and if they be, you cannot be sad: but if they be not, then you are not to be cured by reason, but by something else. When you are apt to fetch a sigh, and say, Oh my dear friend is gone! call it in again, and say, thanks be to God that I had such an one to lose. Who would not be willing to spend some tears after so much joy? But then the remembrance of the joy will command that the tears do not overflow. It is an excellent saying of Seneca[f], "I ever think of my friends with joy; for I had them as if I should lose them, and I have lost them as if I had

[f] Habui illos tanquam amissurus, amisi tanquam habeam. [Epist. 63.]

them." If we could but think of them as dying while they are alive, then we should more easily think of them as alive when they are dead. If we could be willing to part with them when we have them, we should think that we have them when we have parted with them. And the truth is, we cannot please ourselves long in the remembrance of them, unless it be accompanied with some joy. I do not advise you to forget your friends, and put them out of mind, but to remember them, and keep them in your thoughts. But how short a remembrance (saith the same Seneca) must that be, which is always joined with grief and sorrow! If we would remember one always, we must remember him with pleasure; for no man will return willingly to that which he cannot think of without his torment. And if there be any little grief intermixed with our thoughts, yet that grief hath its pleasure. As the sharpness of old wine doth make it more acceptable to men's palates, and as apples are more grateful for their sour sweetness, so Attalus was wont to say, that the remembrance of our friends is the more pleasant for that little sorrow that is mingled with it.

IV. Ask yourselves again, why so many mourn for one. Could that one have mourned more for you all than every one of you do for him? If you will weep, weep only your part, and do not weep as if there was none else to weep but yourselves. If a man that was not acquainted with the world should see ten, or twenty, or perhaps a greater number sitting in a room, and miserably bemoaning of themselves, would he not ask what town was burnt, or what family was dead that caused so many mourners? How much then would he be astonished when he heard the answer, that you had lost a friend, a child, or some one of your other relations! What! Are there so many tears due (would he think) from every man of these upon the score of one creature only? Must so many be ready to die, because one hath taken his leave of them? Can there be no comfort found among so many of you against the death of a single person? Methinks you should all of you together weep no more for the death of one, than that one would have wept for you, if you had been dead all together. Look therefore upon one another and say, You are still left behind, and I am left, and here are

And we have many more remaining.

twenty more of our friends alive; how is it then that we are discontented, as if we had not lost one amongst us all, but every one of us had lost one? If there had been but one of us left, what could we have done more than what every one of us doth? Could he shed more tears for the loss of us all, or make himself more sad than we now are? Either let us say that one and ten are equal, or let us not shed as many tears for one as we would for ten; much less ten times as many tears as there would be for that number. For but one would weep for ten, and here are ten that weep for one. Divide your grief then, and let every one bear a part, but not the whole; for that is as if you had none to bear it with you.

V. Ask thyself, Who is it that governs the world? Is it the will of God, or thy will, that thou prayest may be done? Shall not he that made a thing have leave to dispose of it as he thinks good? By what law is it that he shall not do what he pleases with his own? Must we have our wills in all things, and must not he have his will also? Must not he be pleased as well as we? If we think it so reasonable to have what we will, then it is more reasonable that he should have what pleases him. Now if our will and his will cannot stand together, which shall bend and submit themselves to the other? Is not his will most wise? If he had considered better, would he have done otherwise? Could we have told him what would be most fit for us? If we had been of his counsel, should not this friend have been taken away? Doth he will things because he will? Perhaps there is no reason at all for our wills, and we are in love with a thing we know not why: shall we think that he is so in like manner? Or if we have any reasons, are not his better? We would have the life of a child that he may be a comfort unto us; God will have us to part with him, that he himself may be our only comfort. We should choose his life, that he might enjoy the things that we have got: but God thinks fit that he should die, that we may put our estates to better uses, whereby we are assured he may be more glorified. Or perhaps we desire our children may live for God's glory sake, that they may honour and serve him in the world: but cannot he tell what is best for his own glory? Is he so careless of that as to

Or if we have not, God is still ours, who rules the world, and not we.

take away the things without which he cannot be served? Let us then cease our complaints, unless we would have him to let us govern the world. But he was taken away, will some say, before his time, else I should be content. I shall answer this as Photius doth[g], (who accords with Basil the Great, before-mentioned,) Μή μοι γένοιτο τοιαύτην φωνὴν ἀκοῦσαι, "Let me hear no such word, I beseech you, a word too bold to be spoken, and more bold to be thought. Before the time, do you say? Then why was he not thought to come before the time, when he came out of his mother's womb? There is no reason for it but this, that it was the will and pleasure of God that he should be born at such a time. And must God appoint the time of his birth, and we set the time of his death? Did the workman give him a being in good time, and take him to himself, not knowing the fittest season? From a drop he made him to become a lump of flesh. He formed the flesh into parts, he brought him into the light, and he kept him in his infancy and childhood. Was any of these out of due time? Why then should it be out of season when he translated him to another life?" Let us do therefore as David did, who prayed and wept as long as he could hope the decree of God was not absolute concerning his child's death; but when he saw that it was irreversible, he comforted himself. Let us alway say as Job doth, *The Lord giveth, and the Lord taketh away, and blessed be the name of the Lord.* And let this be further considered to the enforcing of this truth, that if the will of the Lord must be borne, then it must be done. And his will is, that we should take all things patiently, yea, cheerfully from his hands. And therefore if we mourn immoderately, what do we but only add sin unto our pain? As there is a time to laugh, so there is a time to weep: but there is no more time to weep superfluously than there is to laugh idly and profusely. Both in the one and in the other we must be wholly subject to the will of God. But that will of God, as I said, is very wise in every thing, and therefore he intends to turn our mourning into laughter, and by every sad thing that doth befall us to make our hearts glad. He always gives something better than he takes away, if we would but seek after it; and oftentimes he takes one thing

[g] Epist. 234. [p. 351.]

away that we may seek after the better. But alas! our blindness is so great, that we value not that which brings us profit, unless it be sweet to our taste. We let our passion judge, and not our reason; and therefore we think there is no good in a bitter cup, and no danger in a pleasant draught. We lament and mourn when we ought to think ourselves great gainers; and we rejoice and leap, when perhaps a cross of the greatest burden hath befallen us. Let us stay a while therefore, and expect the end of things before we mourn too much. And let us but desire to be cured, rather than pleased; to have our souls amended, rather than our fancy humoured; and we shall have great reason to thank God for every thing that comes to us.

VI. And this will lead me to another consideration, concerning the goodness of God in all that he doth. Ask thyself, therefore, Doth not God do all things for our good? Do we wish better to ourselves than God doth? Hath not he the greatest care of all his creatures, to see that it be well with them? Did he make them for any other end than that they might be happy? Is there the least sparrow, as I said before, that falls to the ground without our Father's providence? Then mankind must needs be under a greater love; and none of them can die by chance, but by his direction. And, above all other men, he hath a singular care over the persons of good Christians, the very hairs of whose heads are all numbered. If not so much as an hair can drop off without him, much less can any body of them fall into their graves, but he hath a hand in it. But still he hath a more special providence over such Christians as are fatherless and widows, helpless and destitute of all succour. And therefore as it was his goodness that took their friends away, so much more will his goodness take care of them whom he hath left none else to take care of. He considers us not only as his children, but as children placed in the midst of such and such circumstances; as desolate and sad, as left only to his providence and tuition. And therefore it is that the Psalmist saith, *Thou art the helper of the fatherless*[h]: and in another

And he rules it better than we could do.

[h] Psalm x. 14.

place, *A father of the fatherless, and a judge of the widow, is God in his holy habitation*[i]. *I am poor and sorrowful: let thy salvation set me up on high*[k]. Yea, and all good men are full of compassion to such persons: so that *the blessings of those that are ready to perish come upon them; and they cause the widow's heart to sing for joy*[l].

It is an excellent saying of the royal philosopher Antoninus, worthy to be engraven upon our minds[m]: "If there be a God, then nothing can be hurtful to us, for he will not involve us in evil: but if either there be none, or he take no care of men's matters, what shall I live for, in a world that is without a God, or without a providence? But there is a God, and he cares for men also, and hath put into their power not to fall into those things which are truly evil. And for the rest that befall us, if any thing of them had been evil, he would have provided that we should have been able not to have fallen into that neither." But if this great person had known also that God leaves us not only to our own power, when he sends any thing upon us, but that he hath a peculiar love to his servants when they are in trouble, and affords them his assistance, he would have said on this sort: If we be not alone without God, then nothing need discomfort us, for he is the God of all comfort: if we be alone, then we had need to be most discomforted for that, and never endure in a condition without God. But we are not alone; and we are least alone when we are alone, and have him most when we have other things least. Therefore he hath put it into our power not to be troubled, but to go to him for comfort in all that befalls us; and if there were no comfort in him for us in such cases, then they should not have befallen us. Let us not therefore mourn as long as we have a God, and as long as all things make us seek for our comfort in him.

VII. Let us ask ourselves, how long we intend to mourn. Doth any man intend to continue it all his life? Then he may fall into the follies of Augustus, who made the image of his nephew, whom he dearly loved, be placed in his bed-chamber, that he might kiss it and embrace

Grief will end; let us end it.

[i] Psalm lxviii. 5.
[k] lxix. 29.
[l] Job xxix. 13, 14.
[m] Εἰ μὲν θεοί εἰσιν, οὐδὲν δεινόν. Κακῷ γάρ σε οὐκ ἂν περιβάλοιεν, &c.—Lib. ii. sect. 11. [p. 26.]

it daily. Or the dotage of Alexander will be a fit punishment for us, who built temples, and commanded sacred solemnities every year for his beloved Ephestion. Do you intend every year to have a funeral sermon? to go and weep over their graves at that time, as you do when they are first put into them? If not, set some measures to your mourning, for of itself it knows no measure. And if you intend not to weep always, why can you not cease now? if it be not a thing to be lamented for ever, why should it be so sadly lamented at all? Decency indeed doth require some mourning, and natural affection must be allowed its tears; but we must stay them as soon as may be, and not mourn as if we thought we could never mourn enough: for if we think so, then we must mourn alway, or else we show that we had no reason to mourn so much. But if any man be resolved to let the sorrow take its course, and run as far as ever it can, let me tell him that either his sorrow will spend him, or else it will spend itself, and so be cured without any thanks at all to him. It is a trite thing which I am going to add, but (to speak with Seneca[n]) I will not therefore forbear to speak it, because it is spoken by all: So it falls out that he who will not put an end to his own grief, time will end it for him. But this is most dishonourable, as hath been already said, to expect till it put an end to itself, when it can run no longer, and not to end it our own selves by not permitting it to run at all without our leave. To be weary of weeping is the basest remedy for grief. It is far better for us to leave grief than to let it leave us. It is a shame to let time conquer that which hath conquered us. Seeing it must cease, let it cease by our valour and strength, not by its own weakness; let it die by our hands, and not merely because it can live no longer.

We are weary of nothing sooner than of grief; and therefore let us cease that which, if we would, we cannot long continue. It is well observed by Pliny the second[o], that as a crude wound is very angry under the chirurgeon's hand, but in a short time doth both suffer it and require it; so a fresh grief doth use to reject and despise all comfort, but shortly after not only receives it most courteously, but also desires and expects it. And seeing, if it can find no comfort, it will fairly

[n] [Epist. 63.] [o] Lib. v. Epist. 16.

cease itself, it is more like men that we should comfort ourselves, and put a period to it.

It may do us much harm before it end.

VIII. Ask thyself again, To what purpose is all my mourning? Every wise man intends some good to himself in what he doth; and therefore, unless sorrow will do us some good, it is a foolish thing to indulge unto it. But can any man that hath had his fill of it tell us what satisfaction it hath given him? May we not put all our gains in our eyes (as the proverb is) after they have wept so immoderately? Doth any man say he is glad that he mourned so much? then he had best mourn again, if there be so much gladness and profit in it. Had we not better say with David concerning his child when it was dead, *I shall go to him, but he shall not return to me?* I may bring myself in sorrow to my grave, but I cannot bring him up from the dead. I cannot water him with my tears, as we do a dry plant, that he may spring up again; but I may easily drown myself, and learn others by my example not to weep so much for me. What I would not have them do for me, why should I do for another? Why should I make myself miserable, and make nobody else the better[p]? The truth is, if there were only no good in it, it were the less matter; but it doth us likewise not a little harm. Though it will end of itself, yet it may breed us no small trouble before it end. This is all the comfort that such a man hath, and it is a very poor one, that if his grief do not kill him, it will kill itself: but many an one hath grief destroyed; many a body hath it distempered, and given most mortal wounds also to the soul itself. Many affections move the soul most vehemently, but none more than grief, which hath been the cause of madness in some (as Plutarch hath observed), and in others hath bred incurable diseases, and made others destroy themselves. And this it may do either naturally, for nothing eats the heart so much as grief, nothing casts such a damp on the vital spirits as immoderate sorrows; or else providentially, by God's anger, who is displeased to see us so angry and repining, and often inflicts worse things upon us than those which we causelessly make the matter of so doleful complaints. Let us

[p] Πολλοὺς ἀπώλεσε λύπη, οὐ μόνον σῶμα διαφθείρασα, &c.—Phot. Epist. 234. [p. 349.]

therefore cease that which brings such troubles before it cease itself, and when it is ceased gives us a new sorrow, to think that we should be so unreasonably sorrowful.

We must write upon this, as well as upon inordinate joys, *Vanity of vanities, all is vanity and vexation of spirit;* and therefore let us not be troubled now, lest we be troubled more afterward, to consider how foolishly we were troubled. The fable of Niobe, which tells how she turned herself with sorrow into a stone, doth but signify the stupidity and dulness that waits upon grief, and the excessive melancholy into which it sometime casts us, which renders us as insensible as a stone. Take heed how you grow in love with sadness, for it hath no profit wherewithal to recompense your affection to it, but pays your folly only with itself, and such diseases as ordinarily use to accompany it. And we should be the less in love with it, because there are so many occasions of it in our lives. We need not weep so much for the loss of one thing, for we must expect continual losses. The world is not such a place that we should take care to spend all our tears at one time; we shall have occasion enough for them if we have any mind to weeping. Let us bestow therefore the less upon one, because there are so many objects to solicit our sorrows. And if our souls be tender, and apt to receive the impressions of doleful things, we have the more need to comfort ourselves, for every grief will but make us still more apt to grieve.

And besides, what a folly is it thus to die with continual grief for him, who, if he did grieve to die, his grief continued but a little while. He died but once; why should we die always? It is certain we must die, but of all deaths let us not die with grief; and much less for grief about that which we see we cannot avoid ourselves. But let us be furthest of all from making our life a perpetual death; and grieving for that which by grief we may so soon run ourselves into.

Weep no more for thy friend than thou wouldst have had him weep for thee.

IX. Ask thyself again, whether two friends do not think that one of them must die first. Do we not see that, in the common course of things, one man goes before another to his grave? Whom then (if it had been permitted to thy choice) wouldst thou have appointed to be the leader unto the other?

Wouldst thou have given thyself the preeminence, and resolved to have shown him the way? Then death, it seems, is a good thing; for if it were evil, we can scarce believe thy self-love is so little as to wish it might be thy portion before another's. And if it be good, then thou mayest soon satisfy the pretence of loving them better than thyself, by being glad that they enjoy it before thyself. Or wouldst thou have had both gone together and been enclosed in the same coffin, and interred in the same grave? Then it seems it is no such great matter to die as thou makest it, seeing thou art so willing to die also. And if it be no great matter for thee to live, then no more was it unto him. If the sorrow of living without him be greater than the sorrow of dying with him, why then was not he desirous that thou shouldst die? And why did he pray for thy life and health when he died? And if he would not have thee to die also when he died, why dost thou then live in a kind of death, and enjoyest not thyself nor the pleasures of life? Either resolve to die also, or else to live as a man should do.

If his death be so sad, thou wilt not be able to bear thy own.

X. Ask thyself, How can I take my own death? Certain it is that thou must die also; but if thou canst not part with a friend, how canst thou part with thyself? How wilt thou endure that soul and body should be separated, if thou canst not shake hands with another body distinct from thine? Are not they the most ancient friends? Is not their union more strict and close? Can two men cleave so together as thy soul embraces its companion? What then wilt thou do when their bonds shall be untied, if thou canst not bear the rupture of lesser cords of love? What wilt thou think when thy soul sits on thy lips, and gives thy body a farewell kiss, if thou canst not close the eyes of thy friend without so many tears? Will thy soul mourn after thy body is dead, as thou dost now lament the death of thy friend? Will it groan and sigh to think of the hole where its flesh lies? Will it sigh to think that its old companion is then become the companion of worms? If not; then let it not groan so heavily for a less matter that is now befallen it. If it will; then why art thou troubled for thy friend and not for thy ownself, to think how sad thou must

one day be? The fear of thy own death must more than equal thy sorrow for the death of another man. And how canst thou have time to think on any thing else if thou dost fear it? or, if thou dost not fear it, how canst thou fall under thy sorrow who hast overcome so great a fear?

Dost thou intend to go crying out of the world? If not; then be not now dismayed at that which thou must bear so valiantly thyself. Then do not mourn so much for the loss of another's life, which will but put self-love into a most piteous case when thou comest to yield up thy own. Death is no strange thing, (as I have said,) for we must all die. But then why should we mourn so much if it be such an usual thing? If we mourn excessively, it is a sign we think not of the commonness of it, and then how shall we take our own death, seeing it is such a stranger to our thoughts? Let us but comfort ourselves upon solid grounds against our own departure, and I will warrant you that shall cure all our other lamentations. Let us but dare to die ourselves, and we shall not dare to cry so much for any man's death.

Isidore of Pelusium[q] thinks that our Saviour did not mourn for his friend Lazarus because he was dead, (for he knew that he was going to raise him from the dead,) but because he was to live again; and to come from the haven where he was arrived, back again into the waves and storms, from the crown which he enjoyed to a new encounter with his enemies.

If thou dost not believe his interpretation, yet dost thou believe the thing? Dost thou seriously consider that the misery of this world is so great, that we should rather weep that we are in it than that others are gone out of it? Then I ask thee again, whether, when thou art dead and well, thou wouldst willingly live again. If not; then thou knowest what to say to thyself concerning thy friend's death. If thou wouldst; then it seems thou canst be contented with this grief; and I will not go about to comfort thee, seeing thou lovest life with all the miseries thou createst to thyself.

But the very truth is, we are so sensible of our bodies, and have so little feeling of our souls or divine things, that it is ready to make us think we are not when our bodies are dead.

[q] Lib. ii. [epist. 173. p. 207.]

This makes death such a terrible thing: this makes both our own and others' death so heavy, because it seems as if there were an extinction of us. That which we feel not, nor have any sense of within us, it is as if it was not: and therefore, if we feel not heavenly things, and perceive not that we have a soul, we shall receive death as if it was the loss of ourselves, and then who can but be sad? Let us live therefore in a sense of such things as may make us die willingly, and think that we ourselves are not lost; and then we shall not think that we have lost our good friends, nor lay their death so much to heart.

Nor wilt thou be able to help others to bear their sorrows.

XI. Ask thyself likewise, How wilt thou be able to comfort others, if thou canst not comfort thyself? It should seem by thy tears that thou art very ambitious of the name of a friend: but if thou be not able to comfort thy friend, what is he the better for thee? And how didst thou deserve to have the friend which thou hast lost? If thou art able, or hast ever given any comfort unto others, administer then the same cordials to thyself. Why should not that satisfy thee, which thou expectedst with so much reason should satisfy them? What thou wouldst say to another if his friend was dead, that say to thyself: and if thou wouldst wonder that he should reject all comfort, then do not make thyself a wonder. Didst thou never tell any man that it is a shame to be impatient, when we can cure ourselves; that they suffer nothing but what God and nature have appointed; that we must all expect such losses; that nobody knows whose turn is next? Take then thy own counsel, and be not such a physician as cannot cure himself at all. Is thy distemper different from theirs? Are there not the same griefs and maladies in their minds? Then the same medicine will cure thee that thou gavest them. Or if it would not cure them, then thou wast much to blame, that didst not seek a better both for them and thee. Or is thine some strange loss, the like to which never any suffered? Then this may comfort thee, that thou shalt never suffer the like again. For it would be more strange, if a thing that never came before should twice fall upon one man. If it be so strange to thee, then thy courage will be as strange to others. If thou art drawn into an ex-

ample of sufferings, then thou mayest render thyself an example to all of patience and contentedness. And so Seneca [q] saith of the brother of Drusus, that though Drusus died in the midst of his embraces, and with his kisses warm upon his mouth; though he died in the very height of his fortune, with the most warlike nations dead at his feet; yet he not only put a measure to his own grief, but taught all the army how to be moderate also. And indeed he could not have stopped the tears of others, unless he had been of so brave a spirit as first to stop his own. If thou art a friend therefore unto any, let them all learn of thee how to be well satisfied. Comfort thyself as thou hast comforted others, or else as thou dost intend to comfort them: and let it be seen by thy worthy behaviour toward thyself, that thou art worthy to be a friend to another person.

XII. Ask thyself again, whether friends only be mortal. Do none die but they that love us? Must not all our enemies and they that hate us die also? Death then that makes thee sad may give thee comfort. As it puts an end to some comforts, so it is the common end of all miseries. Though we may not wish for the death of any, yet it is no harm to think that they must die who hate us, and their rage shall not last for ever. If nothing can cease their malignity, yet death can. It hath done us then no such wrong, but what it can repay us with the same hand that did it. Though we have now no friend, yet shortly we may have no enemy neither. This was one support to the Christians under their persecutions, that though their enemies (like Saul) did breathe out nothing but threatenings and slaughters against them, yet their breath was but in their nostrils, and might soon evaporate and vanish away. Julian, called the Apostate, had done more hurt to the Christians than the ten persecutions, if death had not suddenly wounded him with one of his arrows.

Death doth sometime befriend us.

The Marian flames had devoured in all likelihood a great many more bodies, if death had not shortened her reign, and so extinguished the fires. We have no reason then to look upon it as unkind, which may do us so many courtesies: nor to accuse that of cruelty to us, which destroys the cruelty of others towards us.

[q] [Consol. ad Polyb. cap. 34.]

XIII. And now may you not well make one question more to yourselves, and say, Is there not more reason to be comforted than there is to be sad? If there be, (as certainly there is,) what should hinder your comfort, if you live by reason? If you do not live by it, then nothing that a man can say will comfort you. Nothing will cheer us unless we think of it, and make it our own by meditation: neither will any thing sadden us unless we think of it also. Seeing then they are our own thoughts that make us either sad or merry, and we have more comfortable thoughts than heavy, we cannot but be of good cheer, if we will not be enemies to ourselves. All that we can say for our sadness is, that we have lost a friend, a very dear and perhaps only friend. But you have heard that there are more in the world, and that you have not lost this; and that you have more comforts remaining than are taken away; and that if you had none but God, you had enough; and if you will read again what hath been said, twenty other reasons will offer themselves to cheer, for one that arises to make you sad. If there were no reason at all to be sad, then none need spend any time in giving comfort: but if they be very few in compare with others, and we are made to follow the most and strongest reasons, then he is not to be pitied, who, notwithstanding the small reason of his sorrow, will not be of good comfort.

Contentment hath more to say for itself than grief hath.

The greatest cause that I know of this sort of trouble, is, when many that we love die soon after one another. So it happened to that prince (which the L. Mountaigne speaks of[r]) who received the news of his elder brother's death, whom he highly esteemed, with a great deal of constancy; and shortly after, the tidings of his younger brother's decease, in whom he placed much hope, did not alter the smoothness of his countenance. But when one of his servants died, not long after that, he suffered himself to be so far transported, that he quitted his former resolution, and gave up himself to all grief and sorrow. The reason of this was not from the love that he bare to his person more than the rest, but (as he well saith) because being top full of sorrow before, the next flood must needs break the banks, or overflow all the bounds of patience.

[r] L. 1. Essay. cap. 2. [Œuvres, p. 4.]

And so Hier. Cardan tells us[s], that after he had patiently borne many reproaches, and the cruel infamous death of a son of great hopes, and the dangerous sickness of another son, and the death of his parents, and wife, with many other evils; yea, and after he wrote a book of consolation against all these evils; yet he was overcome with grief at the death of an English youth, whom he brought from Dover with him, as he passed from Scotland, in the time of Edward the Sixth. And he gives the same reason for it that the other doth; *Fatigatum multis adversis, oppressit me hæc extrema infelicitas:* 'being wearied before with many griefs, this last unhappiness made me fall to the ground.' It was not its strength, but his own foregoing weakness that made him fall. It was not heavy, but it came upon the back of many other loads, and so oppressed him.

But something hath been said to this also; for holy Job was in the same condition, and far worse: one messenger did tread upon the heels of another to bring him tidings of his misery; and yet he was patient, though he himself likewise was in his own body most sadly afflicted. We have the same grounds of comfort that he had, and abundance more than was known in those younger times. And when one cause of trouble falls upon the neck of another, we can add one reason likewise unto another, and so be comforted. For our troubles can never be so many as the causes of our consolation are. Yea, one single reason of those that I have propounded will answer all. Do we not know very well that all friends are mortal? Then it can be no new thing (if we well consider it) for two or three to die after we have lost one: but the loss of one doth rather mind us of the mortality of all. And doth not God govern the world in the death of the last as well as of the first? Then there is no less wisdom and goodness in it when many die, than when one. He that can solidly comfort himself in the death of one, will not be immoderately troubled for the loss of more. If we let our grief indeed work under ground, while nothing of it appears; if our hearts be loaded with it, though our eyes look not heavily before others; then it is no wonder if it do at last break forth when the heart is overcharged, and can find no

[s] In Dialog. cui tit. Gulielmus. [tom. i. p. 676.]

other way to ease itself. But if we take a course to comfort our hearts at the very first, and make them truly contented; or if we let not the grief settle itself, but labour to dislodge it; then we shall be the better disposed to bear such another cross with the like patience. For then a new trouble doth not come upon the other, but only follows after it. It doth not add to the former, but only comes in its stead; it doth not augment, but only renew our grief.

We should not be the more troubled because we understand our trouble.

XIV. And now is it not time to conclude these questions, and to say to yourselves, Why should not reason do that which little or no reason can do? The more we are men shall we be the less in peace, and cry like children? Nay, children weep while they see their parents put into the grave, and within a day or two they forget their sorrows; why cannot we do so also? Though they know not their loss, yet they know not the reasons neither why they should not be discontented for their loss: though they have little understanding of their sufferings, yet they have as little knowledge of our comforts and supports. And as for brute creatures, you see that they make a doleful noise for the loss of their young a very short while, and then they remember it no more. Some of the people of Cous[t] (if I forget not) used at the age of seventy years either to kill their parents, or pine them to death, and to rejoice much at it. They thought that they had lived long enough, and that it was both a misery to themselves, and a great burden to their children, to have them continue any longer. The Caspians also, and some of the people of old Spain, had the like custom, which we well call inhuman and barbarous. But why cannot understanding teach us that which want of understanding taught them? Why should barbarism make them rejoice at what they did themselves, and Christianity make us sad at what is done by God and the order of things? St. Hierome reports[u], that in his time there was at Rome a man who had had twenty wives married to a woman who had had two and twenty husbands. There was great expectations

[t] [Or Ceos, according to Strabo, x. 745 A, Steph. Byzant. s. v. Ἰουλίς, and Ælian, Var. Hist. iii. 37. See the numerous parallel instances adduced by Larcher in his note on Herodotus, Clio, i. 216.]

[u] [Epist. cxxiii. tom. i. col. 901 D.]

which of them should die first; and when the man buried her his neighbours crowned him with laurel, and caused him to bear a bough of palm in his hand, in token of a victory, at his wives' funerals. It seems that men can sport at death if they list, and laugh at that which makes so many cry. Why then cannot reason make us moderately sad to bear that which humour and fancy can make men not to lament at all? Why cannot our religion do more with us than the people or our friends, who, it is like, can laugh us sometimes out of our sorrows?

If I have not said too much in this argument, I have some confidence that I have not said too little. And indeed I have said more than I first intended, and so much that, if any have the patience to read it through, methinks the very length of the discourse should make them forget their sorrows, and, by thinking so long upon another thing, they should not remember what they thought upon before. One soul is scarce big enough to hold all these considerations, and the thoughts of grief also. Here are so many, that they are able to thrust sorrow out of doors by their multitude, if not by their strength and force.

And yet, notwithstanding, I must detain you a little longer before I give your thoughts leave to turn themselves to other things. For I am of the mind that all these considerations will only assuage the grief and pricking of the wound, but will not quite heal it, and take away its putrefaction. I shall therefore commend two or three things for the pressing out all the filthy matter, for the closing of the sore, and to make the soul perfectly whole and sound.

SECT. VIII.

Some other things are proposed for the perfect cure of the soul; the first of which is, deadness to the world, and the casting out false opinions: the second is, the changing of our sorrow into another kind: the third is, the life of our Lord Jesus.

I. Be dead to all things, and thou wilt not be offended that they die. Mortify thy spirit to the world and all things that are in it; and when thou hast left them, it will seem no wonder that they leave thee. Think with thyself often that thy friends are dead; that thou seest them carried to the grave; that thou

It is not their death, but the life of something else, that troubles us.

beholdest worms crawling out of their eyes and mouth; and try how thou art able to bear that thought. Think that he or she, that lies in thy bed by thy side, is as cold as a stone; think that thou embracest the carcase of thy dear friend, and ask thy soul how it can brook it. Think thus often, and though thy soul may start at the first, yet at last it will be patient. That little sadness will banish and chase away all the greater that else would seize on thee hereafter. There will be little to do when death comes, if thou constantly dost this. Thy soul will be so loose from them, that thou wilt not give a shriek: none will hear the strings crack when you are separated. Death will not be a breaking of your society, but a fair and easy untying of it. Nothing will happen to you but what you have looked for long before; and you shall be able to say, This is not the first time that I have seen my dear friend dead. Yea, think with thyself that thou seest thy own body laid in the grave, and that thou feelest thyself as cold as a clod of earth. Think that thou art turned into rottenness and dirt, and that thou art forgotten by thy neighbours. If thy soul can endure these thoughts, then why should it be troubled at the death of another? This is a kind of death, to be so separated from thy body in thy thoughts. It is all one not to be in the body, and not to feel that thou art in it. Raise thy mind then up toward heavenly things; fix thy thoughts on God and the life to come; think that thou seest thyself in heaven among the saints of God; and while thy soul is there, it is not in thy body here below. This kind of death differs from that which will be hereafter in this only, that then thou wilt be more perfectly out of thy body. But if there be no trouble in this separation which thou now makest even whilst thou art in it, there will be far less trouble (one would think) quite to part with it, and to get from it.

We must not let false opinions live.

And the way to be dead to these earthly things is, to change our opinion of them, and to see them to be what indeed they are, empty and unsatisfying, changeable and unconstant. Of this I have spoken before in the former discourse; but seeing it is a thing so great and fundamental to our contentment, let me again present you with it. We are the cause of our own grief, by magnifying the things of the world to such a value that the loss of them

shall be worth so many tears. We think that they are happy who are rich and honourable, though they be never so wicked and unskilful how to live. We presently cry up a man for wise, and what not? who (to use Arrianus his phrase) is preferred by Cæsar, though it be but to be groom of his close-stool[t]: and, on the contrary, we despise virtue, if it be in a threadbare coat, and count him a fool who is unfortunate. No wonder then that we cry and whine like children when we lose any of these worldly things, seeing we think ourselves more happy than men in the enjoyment of them. We think that we are undone when we part with that which we have such an high opinion of; and there is no way to make us think that all is safe but by altering of that foolish opinion. We expect what cannot be, and will not be content with what may easily be. We cannot make the things of this world to be still and quiet, but may make ourselves so; and the way to that quietness is well to consider their inconstancy, and that our happiness is in something better.

It was a good rule which Pythagoras gave to all his scholars, and is the same that I would have you learn, Τὴν λεωφόρον μὴ βαδίζειν[u], 'Do not walk in the high way,' i. e. Do not follow the common opinions; be not led by vulgar and popular apprehensions. Rectify the ordinary conceits which you have carelessly entertained of things, and judge of them as they are in themselves, and not as they are reputed of. If we would do thus, then that which is the cause of our sorrow would be the cause of our tranquillity, because nothing hath left us but that which we knew would not stay with us. We mourn now because things are so inconstant; but then we should not mourn, because we knew them to be inconstant. If we could make it good that any of these things are ours, then I might avouch it that they would never have left us; but if they were not ours, why are we offended that God doth what he will with his own? And besides, shall we, who are so inconstant, oblige all things besides ourselves to constancy? Shall we, whose desires are so restless and uncertain, expect that all things but only we should

[t] Ὅταν Καῖσαρ αὐτὸν ἐπὶ τοῦ λατάνου ποιήσῃ, &c.—Lib. i. cap. 19. [p. 136.]

[u] [Porph. Vit. Pythag. p. 199. Diogenes Laërtius attributes to him the opposite maxim, Ἐκτὸς λεωφόρου μὴ βαδίζειν,—Vit. Pythag. lib. viii. cap. 16. § 17.]

be stable and quiet? No, let us look into ourselves, and we shall find so much difficulty to settle them, that we shall not wonder that other things are unsettled. And again, if things be so mutable, why should we not think (as I have already said) that they will one day change to what we would have them? But suppose they should, what are we the better? If our opinion be not turned too, we shall be as much afraid to lose them again, seeing they are so unconstant, as now we are desirous to have them by the benefit of their inconstancy. We must therefore alter our esteem of things now, else we shall only change our trouble, but not be rid of it, when things are changed. *Adeo nihil est miserum nisi cum putes*[x], &c. So certain it is that nothing is miserable but when we think it is so, and that nothing will make us happy unless we think that we are happy. And we had better think so now than stay to be taught this lesson by the dear experience of a great many troubles. Let thine estate be never so prosperous, yet if thine heart be unmortified thou wilt never be the nearer, but rather the further off from settlement: for they that have the greatest abundance are the soonest disturbed by every trifle, because they are not used to have any thing go contrary to their humour.

But if thou wilt take any comfort from the unconstancy of things, let it be this; that if thou thinkest thyself therefore unfortunate, because those things are gone that were joyful, then thou mayest think thyself happy enough, seeing the things that are unpleasant are going away also. And think, I beseech you once more, and be of this opinion, that there is nothing better in this world to thee than thyself. As long therefore as thou hast thyself, why shouldst thou be troubled, especially if thou thyself thinkest never the worse of thyself, because thou art poor and destitute of friends? For these take away nothing of thyself, nor can any thing in the world deprive thee of thyself. And as Boethius[y] well saith, This is the condition of human nature, that it then only excels all things here when it knows itself; but when it doth not it is below the very beasts: for it is natural for them to be ignorant; but for a man it is the basest vice, especially when he is ignorant of himself.

[x] [Boeth. de Consol. Philos. lib. ii. pros. 3.] [y] [Ibid. lib. ii. pros. 4.]

There was a fable among the heathens which wise men understood to contain in it great philosophy[z]. In the midst of this sad discourse, it will please you perhaps if I relate it, and it will please you a great deal more for to learn and live by it. After Jupiter had made the world, he thought that men would not be restrained from sin without rewards and punishments; and so he made two great barrels, the one full of good things, the other full of bad, to be sent down among men as there was occasion. Pandora being very desirous to know what was in these barrels, did one day broach them, and all the good things flew out towards heaven, and all the bad towards hell. Hope only and fear remained in the bottom of these casks; the former in that of evil things, and the latter in that of good. When this was done, Jupiter threw down these empty tubs to the earth, and all mortals ran at the rareness of the sight to see what they could find in them. Some looked into the one, and some into the other, and though both of them were empty, yet they thought verily that the one was full of good and the other full of evil. And ever since it came to pass that here below we have nothing but a fancy or conceit of good mixed with fear and jealousy, and a mere conceit of evil with some hope in the compound of it. The moral of it is this; that the things of this world are but empty goods and inconsiderable evils. They are our own opinions that trouble us with the shadow of evil, and that flatter us on the other side with a fair show of good. All substantial good is in heaven, and all dreadful misery is in hell. If we go to heaven we are well enough whatsoever we lose; if we fall into sin and so into hell, we cannot be well, though we should enjoy all the world; and while we stay here below, there is no good thing we enjoy but is accompanied with fear; and no evil we suffer but is attended with hope. And there is no hope like that which is laid up in heaven, of enjoying a bliss sincere and pure, without any allay at all. Let us turn our minds then towards these heavenly things, which they did but dream of in the dark ages of the world. Let us heartily believe the gospel which hath brought to light eternal life: and then we shall think ourselves happy enough if we lose not those things; and perhaps

[z] [Hesiod. Op. et Dies, i. 81.]

the death of our friends and such like crosses befall us that we may not lose them.

[The Almighty Goodness draws our thoughts and affections by these means from transitory comforts, and calls them up thither where we hope our friends are arrived. See, saith he, here is your home; here is your restingplace; here is the immortal inheritance that never fades away. If you love yourselves, mind the way hither, and suffer nothing to turn you out of it. Whatsoever cross befalls you, take it up and carry it along with you: let it only spur you to make the more haste to eternal joys. Where when we are once seated aloft, amidst those glorious objects which then shall encompass us; with what contempt (as an ingenious person[a] speaks) shall we look down upon this morsel of earth, which men have divided into so many kingdoms; or upon this drop of water whereof so many seas are composed! How shall we smile to see men so busy about the necessities of a body to which we no sooner give one thing, but it asks another; and so disquieted through a weakness of spirit which daily troubles them, as to unwish that to-day which the day before they wished for! Enter, if it be possible, into these generous thoughts beforehand. Begin to speak of the world as you will do when you have forsaken it. Acknowledge it to be a place where you must daily lose something till you have lost all. And by these and the like meditations, let your soul assuredly conceive that having had its original from heaven, it is one of the number of those which must one day return thither.]

II. In the mean time, when the days of mourning come, and sorrow will not be denied its place, let me recommend this advice to every man. As soon as it is possible, turn thy sorrow for thy friend into sorrow for thy sins. Remember that thy tears may be due to some other thing, and the cure of that will cure all thy other griefs. If thou art not a Christian, then it is thy duty to mourn neither for one thing nor other, but only to bewail thyself. *Let the dead bury the dead*, (as our Saviour said,) do thou presently follow after thy Lord

Our tears should be kept for that which is the cause of death and all our tears.

[a] M. Malh. to the princess of Conty. [Lettre 3. Œuvres de M. de Malherbe, tom. iii. p. 34.]

with tears. Take no care of funerals, think of no earthly thing, but only how thou mayest be a Christian. And if thou art so, then thou oughtest to rejoice that thy sins are pardoned, and that thou hast not the greatest cause of grief; and this joy sure will swallow up all thy sorrows. There is scarce any thing so considerable in our bodies that is seen, as our tears; for they are the most notable expressions of what is in our hearts. The hands (as Ant. Guevara observes [b]) do work, the feet do walk, the tongue speaks, but it is the heart only that weeps. The eyes are but the sponges of the heart, through which its affections are drained and dried up. An afflicted heart hath neither hands to labour nor feet to walk, nor can it find a tongue to speak, but tears are all that it hath to tell you what it wants. And therefore we ought to reserve these for some greater thing than our dead friends, which our heart ought much to be affected withal. As our Saviour said to the women of Jerusalem when he was going to the most cruel sufferings, so might our friends say to us when they are a dying, *Weep not for* us, *but weep for yourselves*, if you be dead while you are alive. Mourn more than you do, if you have not yet mourned for your sins and amended them: but if you have, then rejoice in the favour of God, and bless him for his Son Jesus, who is better to thee than ten sons, or all thy friends which thou lamentest. Are our sins dead as well as our friends? have we buried them in the grave of our Lord? are we risen again to an heavenly life? Let us go then to God, and pray to him, and praise him, and this will give us ease. But if we be troubled for sin, then sure we shall not add another sin by immoderate sorrow, and forgetfulness of God's goodness. If it be sin we hate, then bitter complaints and discontents must all be hated. Would you indispose yourself to pray, to praise God and meditate in his sacred word? would you render yourself unfit to receive the sacrament of his most blessed body and blood? If not, then mourn but so much as will not hinder any of these, and you have leave to mourn as much as you please. Stop but here, and there is no man will lay any restraints upon you. But then how short your mourning must be, you will soon guess, and the sun must

[b] [Epistolas, &c. p. 661. 4to. Madr. 1595.]

not go down upon your grief, no more than it must upon your wrath. But if you take no great care whether you disturb your souls or no, then you have most reason to mourn for that carelessness and neglect. Go then and bewail your unkindness to God, your unthankfulness for his mercies, and unbelief of his gospel; for you can never take your hearts in a better time, than when they are so sad and inclined to be sorrowful. Tell them that now they are very well disposed for a necessary business; and bid them look if there be not something else to bewail that is more considerable. Ask thyself, hast thou not deserved this and ten times more? Wilt thou add another sin, when thou shouldst cease all sins? Hast thou not been careless of seeking God? Hast thou not foolishly wasted the precious time? And art thou not troubled at all for that? Yea, art thou now impatient, as if God dealt hardly with thee? And wilt thou spend more time badly, when thou art taught by the death of thy dear friend how short it is? It is most incongruous thus to bewail the death of a child or acquaintance, when thou art like to die thyself both body and soul. And when thou hast mourned for thy sins, thou wilt be taught thereby how little thou oughtest to mourn for thy losses. For even our tears for sin must not be immoderate, and therefore much less must we dare to let them flow in abundance for our losses. So you know the great apostle commands the Corinthians to comfort him that had been guilty of a great sin, and receive him again into the church now that he repented, *lest perhaps such an one should be swallowed up with overmuch sorrow*[c]. I wish all those who are ready to destroy themselves with grief would seriously consider this, that we may not overload our hearts with grief for our sins themselves, which are the causes of all other sorrows.

We cannot please the devil better than by discontent. He would fain oppress every good man with some passion or other; let us take heed how we join with him against ourselves. If we have left his service, that is enough to provoke him. If we have bid defiance to his pleasures, this doth incense him, and we must expect that he will endeavour to overcome us with griefs.

The devil is mad against all good men; and therefore let all

[c] 2 Cor. ii. 7.

those who have irritated him against them, beware how they now prove cowards, and execute his vengeance for him with their own hands. Let us take heed (as Photius excellently expresseth it[d]) lest we be good at stirring up and provoking the envy and rage of our adversary; but naught at resisting and overcoming him by patience and perseverance to the end: *κινῆσαι μὲν ἀγαθοὶ, νικῆσαι δ' ὀκνηροί.*

But if we must needs weep for the loss of something here, let it be for the afflictions of the people of God. Let us mourn to see the church sit like a widow in her black garments. Let it pity us to see the blood of God's servants shed like water upon the ground. If our own sins do not trouble us, let us weep to see the wickedness of the world, and let our eyes run down with tears to think that men do not keep God's law. Some such channel we should cut for our tears, and not let them spend themselves on this fashion about our own personal troubles. This is a method both to stop our tears, and likewise to make them useful to us while they run. It is a way to ease us of our present grief, and of all others also. We shall exchange that sorrow that would have troubled us for a great deal of joy and comfort: whereas our worldly grief would have left the heart sad, this will leave it light and merry.

III. Believe thoroughly that the Lord Jesus lives, and so thou mayest both expect a resurrection from the dead, and likewise hope for comfort from him when thou art left sad and desolate. The body itself doth not die any more than corn doth, which dies that it may live and spring up again with large gain and advantage. Are we loath to throw the corn into the ground? and do we not patiently expect till the harvest comes? Why should we then bury our friends with so many tears, seeing they are but laid in the womb of their mother again, that, by the power of God, they may have a better birth? The heathen could say much to comfort themselves, but they knew not this comfort, for indeed they were rather contented than comforted. Those that thought themselves most wise, and judged that they had the best supports, did only dream that the soul might take another body and shift its place at several

The life of our Lord Jesus gives us the greatest comfort against death.

[d] [Vid. epist. 196. p. 294.]

times; but we know that there will be a time when even our scattered ashes will fly into one another's embraces again, and a new life will breathe into our dust, and make it stand upon its feet. And then, in the meantime, if our condition be never so sad, and we be left all alone, why do we not solace ourselves in the great compassion of our High Priest, who hath a feeling of all our miseries which we endure? Can we expect that ever he should love us more than when we are like unto him in sufferings? We should be so far from being sad at what befalls us, that we should think, if our condition was a little worse, we should be more dear unto him than now we are, when nothing extraordinary is happened to us. No man can be alone as long as he lives who hath said, *I will not leave you comfortless* like fatherless children: *I will come to you.* Did not he bid his disciples to be well content when he himself died? Did not he leave his peace with them, and bid them *that their hearts should not be troubled?* And what is the death of one of our friends to the departure of the best friend in the world that ever was from his little flock of friends? Did not Christ know what he said when he was going to die? Did he advise them not to be troubled when it was impossible that they should be otherwise? And if they were not to be troubled then, I am sure we have less reason to be troubled now; both because we have a less loss to bewail, and we have a stronger and more excellent comfort against our loss. Our friends are as much below him as his state in the grave was beneath that to which he is now advanced in the heavens. Their hearts were not to be troubled when he that is the lover of the world was held in the chains of death, because they knew that he would loose them: why then should we be disturbed for the death of one that loves us only, when we know that *Christ is risen, and that he is in the heavens: angels, authorities, and powers being made subject to him?* If an angel was necessary for our comfort, we should not want his ministry. He is so full of love and compassion towards us, that if he did not think he had left cordials enough to support us, he would come himself to cheer us, and raise our friend, as he did Lazarus, from the dead. But now we may well live in hope, *and he hath given us strong consolation and good hope through grace.* Let us have patience but a little, and we shall

not be capable of mourning any more; all tears shall be wiped off from our eyes, sighing and sorrow shall fly away.

[This is the more deeply to be considered, and here our thoughts ought to stay the longer, because this alone, without the rest, if it be rightly weighed, is sufficient for our consolation. I do not desire you should trust me if I do not produce the most authentic witness; the doctor of the Gentiles, the founder of churches, called from heaven to his apostleship, who, though he was well read in human learning, yet omitting all other things which might and are wont to be said, he strikes down immoderate grief for the loss of our friends with this single thunderbolt: *I would not have you to be ignorant, brethren, concerning them which are asleep, that ye sorrow not, even as others which have no hope. For if we believe that Jesus died and rose again, even so them also that sleep in Jesus will God bring with him*[e]. Or as a great man translates the last words, *even so those who sleep and are commended unto him by Jesus will God bring thither*, where they shall be with Jesus.

It will not be tedious, I believe, if I present you with a large paraphrase, which that excellent person, upon such an occasion as this I am treating of, hath left in a letter of his upon these words. Grotius[f] I mean, who from hence derives the best comforts, which he sent to Mons. du Maurier, the French ambassador then at the Hague, for the loss of his very dear consort. "Letters," says he, "are wont to express that briefly which familiar discourse explains more liberally. Therefore, if St. Paul, after he wrote this Epistle, visited again (as is believed) these Macedonian disciples, it is possible he might utter this most wholesome oracle in words more at length, and prosecute it more largely after this manner:—

"'My friends, whom nature begot at first, and whom the preaching of the gospel hath begot again, to the very same lot and portion with ourselves: you know that it is our duty thoroughly to bring out whatsoever remains in you of the first of these. Now your countenance, your very habit and behaviour plainly tell me that you are afflicted in your minds, both long and grievously, if any of your dear relations be snatched from you.

[e] 1 Thess. iv. 13, 14. [f] Epist. 26. ad Gallos. [p. 76 sqq.]

Your ancestors, you saw, used to be thus miserably troubled, and you see those among whom you live still indulge the like grief. Great is the power of vice, when the authority of parents commends it. Great is the contagion of diseases, which have rooted themselves not in single persons, but in whole nations. But you ought to remember to what discipline you have given your names; when the washing of your bodies figured the purity of your minds. You promised then that you would renounce the world. Peace with God, I told you, was not to be obtained on lower terms. We have opinions, we have rites also, which sever us from the world, and make another portion of mankind. We do not so much as give the same name to things that others do. Those who they say are dead, we say are gone to sleep. So he taught us to speak, who was the most excellent master, not only of living, but of speaking too.

"'What is the meaning of this new language? The Greek poets and philosophers called sleep 'the image of death.' But the resemblance doth not hold among them, which with us is most exact. We understand life by motion and action: which the body wants when it lies as if it were buried in sleep. But when the night is gone, and the day shines, that vigour which was not lost, but intermitted, returns again. And the mind in the mean season, performing those offices which it can do without the body, connects and joins together the ends of both those times by the perpetuity of its action. Just so, when the end of this mortal life comes, the body lies stupid and idle, whether it still retain the form it had before, or be dissolved into its elements. But wait till the great day break, and then that will appear to have only rested for a time, which seemed to have perished. And all that while, that part which is not seen kept possession of life for the whole man.

"'Compare with this faith that which the rest of the wandering world imagines. While they differ in the most and greatest things, they all, in a manner, agree in this; that they despair of seeing the body return to life, and therefore give away immortality from man. For man is an animated body; not a mind without a body, no more than a body without a mind. Many of them think that the mind itself, when it leaves the body, is either reduced to nothing, or at least doth not retain

the state of its proper substance. And so with them the whole man is destroyed, without hope of restitution; as appears from those very consolations which they are wont to give to those that mourn. For they say, it is true, the dead are sensible of no pleasure; but then they feel no pain. And though this be bad enough, yet the opinions of those who make the mind to survive the body are still worse. For the infernal regions (that is, the common place, as they will have it, of minds that leave the body) they paint as if they were some desolate wilderness, as dark as pitch; and in short, with so dismal a face, that there is nobody but would willingly escape them with another death. And, which is worst of all, those to whom they remit all other punishments they describe as perpetually possessed with an endless but vain desire of returning hither to live again. And if there be any of them (which are but few) that have any better guesses, they are doubtful and wavering, more like to men that wish than those that affirm.

" 'But as for you, brethren, you have learnt this among the very first elements (in the A B C, as we speak) of your religion, that souls departed remain in life, and that the body shall return to it. The top of our wishes is the principal thing in the form of our initiation. When you were asked whether you believed the resurrection of the body and eternal life, you all answered, in the presence of God and his people, that you believed it. I argue with you from this form; to which it is not sufficient to give a slight assent. This persuasion ought to root itself in your minds, that it may bring forth ripe, fair, and durable fruit. To which an attentive consideration of the arguments which moved you to subscribe this belief will contribute very much. We did not entice you with the ornaments of speech, nor did we cast a mist before ruder minds by a heap or long train of consequences: but we brought the business to that which is common to men and women, learned and ignorant, young and old, and is thought by all to be most certain, I mean the judgment of sense. One of the greatest inquirers into nature among the Greeks assigns this cause why many things are unknown and cannot be found out; because we cannot see them with our eyes, nor feel them with our hands, which is the most sure way for faith to enter into our mind. But God hath no longer left men this excuse for unbelief; having set before

your eyes, and thrust into our hands, an undoubted example and pledge of the thing for which we hope.

"'Jesus Christ, the Author of our faith, was nailed to a cross in the sight of the city of Jerusalem, and there remained till he was dead. The senate beheld this spectacle, and so did the band of Roman soldiers, together with a vast multitude of strangers: who knew likewise that he was buried and lay in his grave two nights and the day between; as was evident from the testimony of their seal, and of the watch which they set to guard his tomb. In this we and our enemies are agreed: there is no difference, thus far, between us. And yet this very Jesus, thus dead and buried, was seen alive again after that time by certain women of our company, and by his familiars also, both severally and all the eleven together; who did not see him only once neither: and there were those who felt his hands and his sides. And that there might not want any thing to the full assurance of faith, he both showed himself and spake also to five hundred witnesses together; the greatest part of which are alive and still testify this. And as for myself, I saw him shining in a divine majesty; nor was I converted by anybody but himself; who made me change my side, and come over and swear allegiance to him against whom I had expressed the most poisonous hatred.

"'Is there any one that doubts after all this? There is no equal judge sure that dares reject so many witnesses of unblamable life, who get nothing by telling a lie. We are so far from making any gain of this testimony, that it costs us the loss of all those things for which men are tempted to lie. For this cause we incur the hatreds even of our nearest kindred, we are despoiled of our goods, banished our country, and are in hazard of our life every day. No man will be at this charge to deceive another.

"'But if our testimony be received, it is apparent, from the most evident example, that God can restore a dead body to life again. And that this shall really be the happiness of all those that follow the institutes of Christ, is apparent from the same argument; if we do but believe, what many thousands heard, that Christ hath promised it. For the resurrection of our body Christ hath given his testimony; and to Christ, his own resurrection testifies. For the equity of God would not suffer such

an honour to be done to any but him that told the truth; especially when he himself, before the event, had given this as a sign and a proof that he spake nothing but the truth.

" 'Believe us therefore that Christ is made alive again; and believe Christ also, that they who expire in his religion shall again be made alive likewise unto an immortal blessedness, and a blessed immortality. He himself will present us to his Father, who once obtained of him this privilege, that he shall ask nothing in vain. He shall introduce us, partakers of his honour, into those places of undisturbed peace, where no diseases can approach the body, nor vices find a passage to the soul; where there will be a life without fear of death, and joy without mixture of grief. Those pious Christian souls who are gone away from us have already a taste of this feast; in the sweetest tranquillity expecting the accomplishment of their felicity, in conjunction with their bodies. He that heartily believes these things will be so far from grieving overmuch, that he will not be able to refrain from rejoicing with those whom he hath sent before, to the place where all wish to be. For to him who rightly weighs things, they are not dead, but now at last have ceased to die.'

" This place of St. Paul hath drawn me further than I intended, while I endeavoured to examine every word of it, and the force of those words. For I am certain there can be no better remedy found for grief than this, which that great physician of souls, among the immense treasures of wholesome wisdom, brought down from heaven to us. And yet how many things have I omitted, which might be drawn from the same fountain! But these may suffice if we drink them very greedily; so that they run into the very bowels, and every corner of our souls." That will be a great deal better employment, to imbibe these heavenly truths into our hearts, than to let them steep in tears, and still be finding out new causes why we should lament. Why cannot we as well be mustering up the causes of our comfort, and place this in the head of them, (which our Lord hath expressed in few words,) *Because I live, ye shall live also*[g]? In this we shall rest satisfied, if we do not abandon ourselves to such an immoderate passion as will not let us understand the divinest reason.]

[g] John xiv. 19.

SECT. IX.

The conclusion. Which contains an advice to those that are in love with Sorrow. And an advice for the reaping profit by this book. And a brief recapitulation of the chief matters in it.

Let no man therefore be in love with tears.

REMEMBER then, I beseech you, whosoever you are, that cast your eyes on these lines, what I said at the beginning, Take heed you do not indulge yourselves in your tears. *Est enim et dolendi quædam ambitio*[h], 'for there is a certain ambition even in mourning,' and men think that they shall be the better thought of for their grief. But assure yourselves, that if we study to exceed one another in grief, it is but just with God that we should never want misery enough, seeing we are so ambitious of it. If we will mourn immoderately, when he would have us to be patient, we shall not keep ourselves patient, when perhaps there is little or no cause to mourn. When the air is disposed to rain, it is a long time before we can recover fair weather; and every little cloud will fall a weeping, which at another time would have been dry and barren. And just so it is with those that strive to gather together as many clouds as they can to overcast them, and make them sad. It is so long before they can disperse them all, that every little thing renews their grief; as if a cheerful day should never shine upon them more.

It was a very handsome device that one of the ancient philosophers used to comfort Arsinoe[i], when he observed her to weep immoderately for her son's death. "Let me entreat you," said he, "to lend me your patience till I tell you this story:— On a time Jupiter conferred honour upon all the lesser gods or divine powers, and there was none of them wanting but only Sorrow. When all the rest were gone away rejoicing, she came and begged some honour also, with many tears and entreaties. Jupiter having conferred all honours that were worth any thing upon the other heavenly powers, he granted to her all

[h] [Sen. Epist. lxiii.]

[i] [Plut. Consol. ad Apollon. p. 111. He elsewhere attributes the allegory to Æsop, Consol. ad Uxor. p. 609.]

that which men bestow upon their dead friends (viz. grief and tears) as best befitting her quality. Now all these little deities (said this wise man) do love those most that love and honour them, and so doth Sorrow also. They bestow most of their gifts on their votaries, and those that pay them constant services: and they care not for those that observe none of their ceremonies. If you therefore bestow no honour upon Sorrow, then she will not love you, nor come to you. But if you studiously seek how to please her, and honour her by tears and lamentations, and all such sad things that are the offices wherein she delights; she will be in love with you, and you shall never want her company, nor be without occasions of doing continual honour to her. She will be continually supplying thee with tears to pour upon her altar, and filling thee with sighs, which are the incense which she loves thou shouldst evaporate toward heaven." By this art the wise man stayed her tears; for she knew that he meant, that if we give way to grief, we shall never want it: and much more if we seek for arguments to aggravate it, it will stick so fast unto us, that it will never forsake us. Though love and respect to our friends, and the natural affection which distinguisheth us from beasts, do allow and require moderate sorrow and sadness of our spirit; yet an intemperate grief and afflicting of our souls is unreasonable, for it doth them no good: and it is unnatural, for it doth both our body and mind abundance of harm: and let me add likewise, that it is unchristian, and argues that we have little hope in God either for ourselves or others. God hath done us the honour to make us priests unto himself; and you know it was the law for the priests, that none of them should mourn for a dead friend, unless he was of their nearest kindred; and therefore let us take heed how we make ourselves unclean for the dead, by weeping so, that we should unfit ourselves for any Christian service, which God hath appointed us for our constant employment. Can you mourn and praise God too? Can you pour out your souls to God, while you pour out these tears of grief? Can you pray in faith for other things, and not be able to believe that you can live without a friend? Can you read seriously, when your eyes are sore with the sharpness of your sorrow? Can you meditate of heavenly things, while your thoughts are filled with the images of such doleful objects? If

not, know that you defile your priesthood, and that you must instantly cleanse yourselves, that you may be fit continually to offer up spiritual sacrifices unto God.

And for a conclusion of this discourse, remember what I said in the former treatise, that you must lay these foundations and grounds of comfort within yourselves, or else you will always be troubled. It is something within us that must satisfy our minds, and not the enjoyment of any outward good; and therefore we must work these principles into our hearts, for even they, if they be without us, will not profit. We either think it is the thing we want which will cure us, whenas it is without us; or else that we have reasons enough to comfort us, whenas, alas! we want them also, because we let them lie without us, and have them not in our minds. We have more ways than one to abuse and deceive ourselves. At first we think that if we had what our hearts desire at this present, we should never be disquieted: and when by reason and experience we find it otherwise, then we make a great many good principles upon which to rest our souls, but they are at a great distance also from our hearts; and when we should use them, they are none of our own no more than any thing in this world.

He must write these things in his heart, who would find the comfort of them.

Let these two things then settle themselves in our minds, which will lead us into the right way of fortifying our souls both against this and all other trouble. First, Never think that the things which thou wantest will cure thee; for they will rather make the wound wider, and enlarge thy wants. The more we have, the more we desire still to have; and the way to think we have enough, is not to desire to have too much. It is very well observed by Plutarch [k], that it seems to us as if our clothes did give us heat, whenas they are cold of themselves, and in a great heat we shift our clothes to make us cool. Just so do men think that the things without them will afford them content; and that if they had a sumptuous house, and had riches at command, and were encompassed with servants, and had their friends to bear them company, they should live most sweetly and deliciously; whenas experience teaches us, that we are still desirous of some change in one

[k] Περὶ ἀρετῆς. [*Τὰ ἱμάτια δοκεῖ θερμαίνειν τὸν ἄνθρωπον, οὐκ αὐτὰ δήπου θερμαίνοντα καὶ προσβάλλοντα τὴν θερμότητα,*—p. 100 A.]

thing or other about us. It is the heat of our own bodies that keeps us warm, which our clothes do only contain and keep in, that it may not fly abroad, and disperse in the air: and so is it the liveliness and strength of our own spirit that must make us live merrily, and which gives all the pleasure and grace to these outward things which minister to our comfort. They can only help to maintain and increase our delights; but our delight must arise from a more certain cause within ourselves. Add one heap of riches to another, build great houses, invite to thyself friends and lovers: unless thou dost free thyself from thy own desires, unless thou dost put an end to thy fears and cares, and such like things, thou dost but like him that administers wine to a man in a fever, or honey to a choleric person, or meat to him that is troubled with the colic; which do not strengthen, but destroy them. The less we have, the better it is, unless we desire but a little. And therefore it is of absolute necessity that we form to ourselves such strong principles as will moderate our desires, and make them reasonable.

But then let me tell you in the second place, that a good book, and a treatise of the principles of contentment, may be without us as well as any thing else. We think that we have good reasons of being quiet which will comfort us upon all occasions. But where are they? In our book? This is no more ours than our money that bought it, unless the book be in our heart. We must labour to write these truths on our souls, and turn them into the reason of our minds. Things of faith we must make as if they were things of reason: and things of reason we must make as sensible as if they beat continually upon our eyes and ears. Let us colour and die our souls with these notions, or else they will do us but little good. If this book lie by us, and not in us, it will be little better than waste paper. Ἀλλὸ γάρ ἐστιν ὡς εἰς ταμιεῖον, &c. saith Epictetus[1]: 'for it is one thing to have bread and wine in a cupboard;' and another thing to have them in our body. When they are eaten and drunk, they turn into flesh and blood, and make us lusty and strong: but when they lie by us, we think indeed we have them, but they afford us no nourishment or refreshment at all. Even so it is in these things, if we inwardly digest them, and turn them (as it were) into the substance of

[1] Arrian. l. ii. cap. 9. [p. 192.]

our souls, they will make us of a lively complexion; but else we may be pale with fear, and pine away with grief; and it is not their fault, but our own. And as he that doth not eat when he should may have no stomach when he is weak, but presently vomit up his food again: so he that minds not these things till he be sick of his troubles, and in great need of comfort, will find his soul (it is most likely) very impatient of the remedy; and it will be a trouble to him but to read that which will quiet him.

[Thus, I observe, it was with a very great man, a person endowed with an extraordinary measure of wisdom: who rejected himself, in a time of sorrow, all those counsels that he had skilfully administered to others. Julius Scaliger I mean, who, writing to a friend of his to comfort her in her mourning[m], beseeches her to remember how far it is from common prudence, not to lay down that grief for our own sake which we have taken up for the sake of another; and that it is not the part of a sound judgment to accuse the Fates as if they had done us wrong, and to take a severe punishment for it upon ourselves. "Consider also, where is that person we weep for? If in heaven, what need is there of our howlings? If in misery, why do we add loss to loss, evil to evil? and because he is miserable against our will, make ourselves freely and willingly miserable? But this, above all things, I would have you keep in mind, that you have nothing which you have not received; and therefore you owe thanks, even now, for what you had to him from whom you received it; and ought not to reproach him for calling home his own. For all the benefits bestowed on mortals are like all things here, frail, withering, and cannot last for ever; nay, unsteady, inconstant, and never equal. If therefore we enjoy any of them, we must place it among our felicities that we were owners of it; and when by the severe laws of the universe it is snatched from us, we must refresh ourselves with the remembrance of it, as if it were present, and not vex and torment ourselves because of its absence." Many things like to these, and perhaps better, he saith, he could suggest if he thought it needful. And yet this very counsellor, I observe, when his turn came to weep, was strangely overcome with sorrow for the death of a little son of

[m] Epist. 67. ad Marg. Vitelliam. [p. 198.]

his, but a child of great hopes. He cries out lamentably, and bewails himself without measure, saying, *In illo vivebam, in illo interii*[n], 'I lived in him, and in him I died.' "I know he is happy, and therefore I do not bewail him in myself, but myself in him: by whose fall I am fallen also. I say, I bewail myself, who die a new kind of way, and am killed by another's death." And then, reckoning up the arguments whereby his friends studied to comfort him, (the very same wherewith he thought he could comfort others,) he despises them all as not worth a straw; telling them that they expressed indeed a great deal of humanity to him, but not much wisdom: for his loss was so incomparable, that there was no hope he should ever cease to lament it. In this, I believe, he found himself happily mistaken: for Time, which ends all things, will end our grief, though we strive never so obstinately to hinder it. His proceeding is slow, (as one speaks,) but the effect is infallible. But we may learn by such examples as this the necessity of concocting our own thoughts, and settling ourselves upon our own rules and prescriptions. Otherwise we shall be in danger (as he pathetically expresses his misery) to celebrate the obsequies of our friends in a sadder manner than the heathen did. For they sacrificed to their ghosts only with the blood of beasts; but we shall offer up to their memory all our counsels, and be at the charge of losing our very reason.]

Meditate therefore seriously of what hath been said. Think that you are not losers by your friends' gains, and that there is no reason to be sorrowful when they are filled with joy. We love ourselves indeed better than we do them, and are troubled at our own loss, not at theirs; but then if the loss be our own, we can tell better how to repair it. This is our comfort; that it is in our own hands to ease ourselves, if we be the cause of our own trouble. Consider often that it is as natural to die as it is to be born: that God gives us every thing upon this condition, that we should be content to give it up again when he pleases to call for it: that God is a loving Father, and doth every thing for the best: that he would have us love him more when he leaves us nothing else to love: that nothing can be dis-

A recapitulation of the chief things that have been said.

[n] Oratio in luctu Audoeti filii. [inter epist. 98. p. 297. 8vo. Hanov. 1612.]

mally sad which by his grace and our care may be turned into joy: that we ought to turn our sorrow into care, lest there be something worse to sorrow for, even the sin of our immoderate sorrow: that we ought to live so, that we may comfort ourselves with hope we shall see our friends again that die in the Lord: that, seeing we must die too, and others must weep for us, by our life we must leave them something to comfort them, in hope that we are better than if we were with them. We must often consider how much of our grief depends on mere fancy, and not on things. We were perhaps at a great distance from our friends while they lived, and did but seldom see them. The case is not much altered now that they are dead. If we have sustained a loss, we do but double it by losing our own quiet and comfort also. And yet there is more cause of thankfulness than of repining; both that we had them so long, and also that God hath taken away only them. Our grief at last must cease; and that which will end it then may end it now. Or, if it must end itself by its own weariness, it is a shame that religious reason cannot do more than mere length of time can do. It is but as we ourselves would have it, who would have been loath to have died first. Or else it is as they would have it who would have been loath to have outlived us, and been so sad as we make it necessary to be. They are not quite gone away, but only gone before; and by sorrow we may tread too fast upon their heels. Let us henceforth place our chiefest comfort in God; for if one be taken away, then so may another. There will be every day new matter of trouble; and unless we be better provided against it, we shall be every day miserable. This world is the place of sorrow; and therefore, seeing there are things enough to trouble us, let it not be our work to create trouble to ourselves. Trouble is a thing that will come without our call, but true joy will not spring up without ourselves. If any sorrow should oppress us, it must be for our sins: and when we mourn for them, let us be sorrowful we were no more thankful for such enjoyments as we have now lost. Let these tears also teach us to take off our affections from worldly things; all the pleasure of whose possession is scarce big enough to compensate the trouble of parting with them. [And above all, remember that Jesus died and entered into the grave as well as we; and that, by his

resurrection, he hath opened the gate of immortal life, and is in glory at God's right hand; and expects your coming thither where he is out of this calamitous place; and that, in the meantime, you should not disparage your hope in him by impatience under the loss of any other thing. And then your wisdom to distinguish the value of this world from the next, and your religious fear to offend your merciful Father, and lose his blessing by repining at what he doth, will undoubtedly preserve you from all inordinate and undutiful sorrow, be the cause of it never so great.

Especially if you consider (as the great person I mentioned before discourses[o]) that "God takes care of all things; though not of all alike, because they are not all alike." The degrees of Providence are according to the degrees of things. He governs the affairs of beasts more loosely, those of men more strictly. "And among mankind he vouchsafes to take a special care of kings and princes, as terrestrial stars, from whom the tempest of war or the serenity of peace flows down upon the people. But that supreme goodness holds nothing so dear as those that are in earnest good Christians. He will have kingdoms themselves serve their uses. He ordains nothing in which he hath not a particular respect to them: so that those things are for them which seem against them. That is an immovable decree, that *all things shall turn to the good of those who truly love God*[p]. Nor let it seem strange if he do not treat them delicately but keep them under discipline. Even this is part of his fatherly care: for he either purges them by sharp medicines, which prick the bowels, if in the crowd they have catched some infection; or he antidotes them by some wholesome but bitter preservative before a disease seize on them; or the soldier of God must be proved, that he, that others may see how he hath profited. Virtue is tried by difficulties; God always exacts such pains from the pious; and the greater from Christians, who, from the very banner of the cross, ought to understand their obligations. Their captains, struggling through all manner of troubles, dedicated this way to heaven. Why should not we courageously engage in the same warfare, being so sure of a noble reward if we over-

[o] Grotius, epist. xxvi. ad Gallos. [p. 88 sqq.]

[p] [Rom. viii. 28.]

come, and so sure to overcome if we do but fight? For he that is our Rewarder is our Helper. He holds forth a crown to us, and he furnishes us with weapons. He exposes none to the conflict but whom he knows able to endure it, or whom he will make able. He can no more deny the help of his heavenly inspirations to those that heartily ask them, than a kind and rich father can deny bread to his hungry child. How many philosophers, how many of the lower sort in former times subdued grief with less help? And shall we, who neither want the use of reason nor the example of former times, and besides are sure of that peculiar mighty succour from above, turn our backs to any though great calamity?"

We shall never sure be guilty of such base cowardice; especially if in this (when grief for the loss of our friends assaults us) we can add to all other comforts this good hope, that "the soul of him or her, who upon so many accounts was most dear to us, hath begun to reap the sweetest fruits of its virtue, and to taste the promised reward of sincere piety. The last period of so many ages, which shall restore the whole of us to ourselves, that immense heap of good things (far beyond all we can think, all we can wish), doth not now appear to such a soul as it doth to us, a great way off, but near at hand, and just before its eyes. That which it hath now is so great that it wants nothing; and yet that is much greater which it sees it shall have. And do not say, But it might have come later thither. That person receives more, who in time receives more: it is a great happiness to be happy quickly[q]."]

[q] [Id. p. 82.]

[The passages indicated by brackets were added by the author in the later editions of the work.]

A BRIEF EXHORTATION

TO

THOSE WHO ARE SHUT UP FROM OUR SOCIETY,
AND DEPRIVED AT PRESENT OF PUBLIC INSTRUCTION.

WHICH MAY BE USEFUL TO OTHERS ALSO
WHO HAVE ANY FEELING OF GOD'S JUDGMENTS.

AN ADVERTISEMENT.

It is thought fit to annex to this treatise two little papers, printed in the time of the late plague: the latter of them being a Consolatory Discourse that hath great affinity with the argument of this book; and the former, because of its relation to the other, being not handsomely separable from it. Toward the conclusion also of the latter there is something added for the fuller explication of the xcist Psalm: which could be but briefly touched when it was crowded among so many other things into one sheet of paper.

A BRIEF EXHORTATION,

&c.

Beloved,

IT is so natural to every one when he is in distress to think of those sins which he presently concludes have brought him into it, that I am willing to presume there is none of you but hath reflected on himself before this time, and asked his soul, What have I done? Affliction is the season for consideration: it is the mother of many wise thoughts, and much knowledge, especially of men's selves, to whom they are too great strangers till that day comes. In a time then of such great calamity as this, when the hand of God presses you so sore, to suppose you to be without all serious reflections on your ways, would be to imagine you as hard as the stones: we cannot believe you are so insensible. Now that death presents itself so near, and looks you in the very face, it is not possible but that you begin to consider how you have lived, and what preparation you have made for another state. Now sure you ask yourselves these questions with some passion, What have we done? and, What shall we do to be saved? Nay, my charity carries me so far as to think that, in such straits as these to which you are reduced, you have done a great deal more, and proceeded to make many resolutions of amendment. You have vowed to God (I persuade myself) that if he will spare your lives you will forsake those sins which have made you so miserable, and live hereafter in a stricter observance of his holy commands. You are willing to receive your lives from his hands on these conditions. You ask them on no other terms but that they may be better employed for him; and desire him (I presume) to deal with you as you seriously mean to become new men.

These things therefore passing for granted, I will not fill up this little paper with earnest exhortations to repentance, for which the rod of God calls so loudly; but rather direct you to make it such a repentance as shall never be repented of. And awaken yourselves, I beseech you, to consider what I say.

Sit down and pause a while, as you go along, to urge every thing upon your heart; and what is said here in brief, make long discourses of to yourselves, labouring at this present to supply the preacher's place.

I. And first, since you are now looking into yourselves, I beseech you search to the very bottom of your hearts. Though it be a great way thither, yet God hath now given you time and leisure enough to descend into it. As near as you can, therefore, unravel all your life, that you may see what the whole course of it hath been. Reflect, I mean, not only on some sins that are nearer at hand, but look on those that are further off, and lie more out of your view. Lay yourselves naked, and examine yourselves all over, both without and within, that you may find out every thing which is offensive to God. Else I must tell you, this affliction will only make hypocrites instead of producing good Christians. The fruit of it will be only a partial reformation, which in effect is none at all. Shall I assist you a little in this great affair?

Know then that the sins which you are in search of are commonly (for more easy understanding sake) comprehended under these three heads: 1. Such as are directly against God; 2. Such as are an injury also to your neighbour; and, 3. Such as are against yourselves. Some of which likewise consist in doing what you ought not to have done; and others in not doing those things which you ought to have done.

1. And therefore, in your inquiry after the offences against the majesty of God, you must consider such things as these: Have you not been wont to blaspheme the name of God and his Son? Is it not your custom to swear and curse, to deride religion, and to make a scoff of holy things? or, at least, have you not been very negligent in your thoughts of God? Have you used yourself to call to mind who made you? Have you spent any time in pondering his great love in sending his Son to you? Have you not resisted many motions of the Holy Ghost? Have you not omitted to worship God as you ought by daily prayer and giving him thanks? Have you constantly attended his public service? Have you not stayed at home when you ought to have been in the house of God? Behold then (before you go any further) your sin in your punishment. You may not go

thither if you would, whither when you might have gone you would not. O consider, how many happy opportunities have you let pass unregarded! how many blessings have you received, and never minded from whence they came! how long have you lived, and yet been as without God in the world; carrying no fear of a Supreme Power in your mind, no love to the Father of your being, no grateful sense of the benefits which he doth you every moment! For these things you ought to be ashamed and confounded. It ought to make you blush to lift up your eyes to heaven, when you reflect on these neglects. For there is nothing so unnatural as this, to forget him that made you, that sustains you, that provides you with a world of good things continually, both for soul and body.

2. And now when you turn your thoughts from hence (as soon as sorrow and grief will let you) to look upon the offences which may be committed against your neighbour; you will find them to be so many, that it will cost you some time to do no more than know them. For as many persons as you are acquainted withal, or stand in relation unto, so many sins may arise by your injuries or neglects of them. Some of these persons (for example sake) are your equals. Consider therefore, Have you been always just in word and deed to them? Have you defrauded no man? Have you never slandered nor backbited your neighbours? Have you not been a makebate among them and disturbed their peace? Was it not your wont to pass the time in jeering of them, or passing rash censures and judgments upon them? Is there no malice nor hatred in your hearts to any of them? Have you pardoned them when they wronged you? Do you not bear an old grudge to some or other? Are you not forgetful of benefits, and revengeful of injuries? Have you succoured, as you were able, those that were in need? Have you not been without compassion to the poor, and unmindful of those that were sick? All these things must be examined: and many more will present themselves to your thoughts, if you do seriously employ them to find out those faults that are to be amended.

And again you will see (if you look about you) that there are other persons who stand above you, requiring other regards than your equals do. And here it is much to be considered, whether you have dutifully carried yourselves to your natural

parents: whether you have honoured the king, with your spiritual governors and pastors, as you ought: and whether your masters and all your betters have had their due respect. Have you not been irreverent in your behaviour or speeches to some of these? Have you not disobeyed their just commands, and contemned their orders? Have you not causelessly quarrelled with their injunctions, and found fault with their government? Nay, hath it not been your manner to revile them and speak evil of them? Are you not ready to believe all the evil that is spoken by others, and to sit in judgment upon your governors? Do you not slight and undervalue their authority? Have you not mean thoughts of them, never considering that they are set by God over you? I doubt these are sins that have spread themselves far more than the plague. And therefore narrowly examine yourselves about them, that none of them may escape your notice.

And then cast your eyes on other persons that are below you, who may charge you it is possible with many sins more. Consider, What care have you taken of your children, your servants, and all others who are committed to your charge, that they may want nothing that is needful either for their souls or bodies? Have you made a conscience to instruct them in their duty, or to send them to be instructed? I cannot instance in all particulars, unless I should write a book; and therefore I desire those who are parents only to inquire about this one thing, which is of great moment. Have you put your children in mind often of the vow they made in baptism? Do you remember them of their promise to forsake the devil and all his works, and to keep God's holy will and commandments? Do you tell them that God hath taken them to be his children, and that they may not therefore do as they list, but as he would have them? Do you teach them the catechism which is appointed for their instruction; and take care they come to him that hath the cure of souls among you when it is required, there reverently to receive his admonitions? I fear these things are too much neglected, if not despised, or else we should see Christian people in better condition. If any of you therefore intend now to make one good Christian, let him call himself to an account in this particular.

3. You see (my brethren) already, that it is a very serious business to amend, seeing there are so many things to be set in order. And yet you have not heard all that you have to do if you design a reformation. For you are to consider how you have respected yourselves, to whom there is a great reverence due, and whom many things do very much misbecome. As for example, is it fit for a rational creature to mind nothing else but getting of wealth, which he must so shortly leave? Hath he nothing else to care for but what he shall eat, and what he shall drink, and wherewithal he shall be clothed? Is it seemly for him to wallow in drink, to burn with lust and filthy desires? How doth he look when he is full of wrath, and transported by his choler? Is he not quite transformed? Doth he not seem to be beside himself? Examine yourselves then in these things; in matters of temperance, of chastity, of meekness, of patience, of heavenly-mindedness, and such like. And think you are not yourselves till you be reclaimed from the sottish vice of drinking and tippling; from beastly uncleanness; from fury and rage, which are no less brutish; nay, from earthly-mindedness and the love of money, which is a very gross stupidity.

But I see it will not consist with the brevity I design to say any more on this head, but the rest must be left to your own conscience. Only let me briefly note two benefits which you will receive by an impartial sober weighing of what hath been said. First, you will see that it is a work of time and pains to amend so many things as you may find amiss; and therefore will require not only your present, but your future endeavours: especially if you consider, that in all the cases I have mentioned, there are these things likewise to be examined and pondered;—the frequency of those sins, the delight you took in them, the expense of time and money they put you to, the degree of boldness and shamelessness, the scandal they brought along with them, the dishonour they did to religion, to holy days, and holy things, the many reproofs and checks they were against, with all the vows and resolutions which you broke that you might commit them. If these things, I say, be weighed, you will not easily believe yourselves, if you should fancy that the business is already done, which I suppose was

but begun, together with this affliction that is upon you. And now I mention your affliction, it gives a fit occasion for the second note which I would have you make, viz. that your punishment is a great deal less than you deserve; that you have not received so many stripes as you have committed offences. Here being such a vast number of sins which you may find yourselves guilty of, it will make you cry out, (if you be touched with any pious sense,) *It is of the Lord's mercies that we are not consumed. Why doth a living man complain, a man for the punishment of his sin*[a]*?* There is no reason that we should repine under his afflicting hand, but rather bless his goodness that we are not in a far more lamentable condition.

II. And that you may not be more miserable, nor after severer strokes here fall into everlasting condemnation, I beseech you, as you love your souls, stir them up by the grace of God to a thorough and speedy reformation in every particular wherein you must charge yourselves to have done amiss. You see your work; do not go about it with a dull and an heavy heart; but with earnestness, with zeal and fervour of spirit, as those who are infinitely concerned in it. The danger you are in sure will awaken you. The judgments of God which hang over your heads will chase away all sloth and laziness. And especially the sad sense of your former neglects will make you give all diligence, that this business may not miscarry in your hands. Which that it may not,

III. I beseech you, in the next place, that your purposes of reformation (which I hope you are now forming) may proceed upon a right ground, and flow from a sound and lasting principle of obedience; viz. not merely from the fear and dread of God's present judgments, but from a true fear of himself, and a reverend regard to his sovereign authority: not merely that you may now escape out of his hands and save your lives, but that you may be really his friends and live to him. If your resolutions take their beginning from the heavy stroke which is upon you, yet they must take their growth and confirmation from the consideration of the cause of it, which is nothing else but your sins against God. These you must hate

[a] [Lam. iii. 22, 39.]

more than the plague itself. You must purpose to amend out of an abhorrence you have to all disobedience against his Majesty, out of a love you bear to his blessed nature and holy will; out of a sense he is our Lord and Governor; that all his laws are just and good; that he is your chief good and last end, in agreement with whom only you can be happy. For if it be nothing else but the present calamities which awake you, when they are gone you will fall asleep and be secure in your sins again. But the fear and the love of God will always inspire you to do well, and they will never let you return to folly any more. Those will also make you entire in your obedience: they are an universal cause of all virtue: they will not suffer you to be partial in your duty, but thoroughly instruct you to every good work. And here I beseech you again to have a respect to all God's commandments, for it can never be too often remembered. Place not your amendment only in increasing your devotion, but in bettering your manners. This is the damning hypocrisy of this age, that it slights all good morality, and spends its zeal only in matters of worship and devotion.

IV. And now I have but one request more to make to you, which you will easily grant if the foregoing be entertained. It is this: If God be pleased to restore you to your liberty again, (which we continually pray for,) be sure to make good the vows which now are upon you. Let it be seen that indeed the love of God and religion is in your hearts, and that your purposes are not the fruit of a present passion. Cannot you remember that you have made many promises to God before now which were never performed? Hath not a sickness or a sermon begot some resolutions which all vanished away? O search, I beseech you, (if you love your eternal life,) after the cause of this falseness, for it will betray your purposes again. Was it not because you did not thoroughly hate the sin which you promised to leave? Was it not because a right sense of God and goodness had not settled itself in your minds? Did not your disaffection to sin arise only because the temptation was gone? Was not your appetite then surfeited and sick, which in time recovered itself? Then just so it will be hereafter when you go abroad again. You will renew your friend-

ship with your evil courses, unless you have some good principles in you stronger than all your sinful appetites, and than all the solicitations of the world.

If you mean therefore to be as good as your word, you see it is of absolute necessity to settle some firm unalterable principle of new obedience in your soul. The former advice must be diligently heeded, unless you intend to lose all your labour; and so must these also that follow.

1. The better to assure your future obedience, I wish you to make some experiment upon yourselves while you remain within doors. There are some things that can be done at this very time: let us see you perform them if you would have us believe that you mean to amend. Cannot you now be patient, and not think hardly of God or men? Cannot you bless God for this affliction, and pray that it may do you good? Cannot you spend your time very much in meditation, in prayer, and in examining yourselves? Cannot you seriously desire the prayers of good people for you? Cannot you reform that vain and evil communication which we hear many of you entertain at your windows with idle and loose people, that are not at all affected with the judgments of God upon the land? If you will not do these, never believe any of the promises you make of amendment in all the rest.

2. And then I entreat you to resolve by the grace of God to continue those holy exercises of prayer, meditation, and examining yourselves when you come abroad again, in order to make you perform the other parts of your duty. They are not all religion, (as men foolishly think,) but they are the helps and means to bring us to the practice of all that God commands. Therefore be sure you spend some part of every day in calling to mind your purposes, and the grounds or reasons on which they were made. Put yourselves in mind of God, of your dependence on him, and of the love and duty you owe him. Earnestly beseech him, for Jesus his sake, to assist you with the grace of his Holy Spirit that you may keep your word. And take an account of your performance as often as you can. And let me take the liberty to tell you, it is easy here to read your sin in your present chastisement. You have not loved to be retired, and so God shuts you up whether you will or no. Shut up yourself therefore hereafter in secret:

get aside from all company; and be alone with yourselves and God, if you mean to be saved. You have complained, it is like, in times past, that you had no time to spare from your necessary occasions. Behold! now God hath taken away this objection from this busy city. Now they have leisure enough who would find none before. Now he hath left them nothing else to do but to consider their ways. Their trades stood lately in their way to heaven: they could not pass thither through their shops: and so now he hath shut up their shop doors and removed their trade from them. He hath made room now for religion, which could find no place a little while ago. He would let that into their houses and hearts which was barred out by innumerable employments. He seems to bid them now be wise merchants for better things, and to follow a traffic with heaven, which they would have no commerce withal before. This, if our people will not see, they must die (I think) of incurable blindness. And let all those whose eyes are opened have a care to amend this great, this first fault, which makes so many others.

3. To which let this request be also added, that you would all remember to confirm your resolutions by frequent and reverend receiving of the sacrament of the Lord's supper. A duty too much neglected, though it be instituted on purpose for a remembrance of Christ's love in giving his life for us, than which there is nothing more powerful to move our hearts to all love and obedience. This every little business in the world can put by: for this men can find no time; and so their resolutions are starved and die for want of so good nourishment as this holy feast would afford them. If then you would have them maintained in life, do not deny your souls the benefit of this divine food, but take all opportunities to refresh and strengthen them therewith.

4. It would be of great use also if you would often seriously reflect upon the indulgence of God in sparing your lives, when so many thousands were every week cut off. Cast your eyes back upon this mournful time, and think, Why was not my grave digged among the rest? You cannot imagine the mercy of God hath so mean an end as to continue you here only to eat and drink, to get wealth and enjoy the rest of the pleasures of the flesh. The world is in no such need of you that

you should stay only to take up a room in it. It would still be full enough if you were gone. Your living when others are dead is of no consequence, unless it be to prepare for a better life. Use it therefore for that end, and think that you are delivered to glorify your Creator by new obedience.

5. I should have desired you withal often to think of death; and not to look upon it as a great way off because you have escaped this stroke. It may lie in ambush for you in another place, and therefore you are to expect that every where, which waits for you nobody knows where.

6. And lastly, I should have commended to your most serious meditation the promises of the life to come; beseeching you not to lose so great a good for want of persevering a few days longer in that good mind wherein you now find yourselves by the grace of God.

But then I should leave no room for a few words to all truly pious souls who may lie under this calamity as well as others. To you, at last, O dear friends, this short discourse addresses itself: and though I know you will not think yourselves unconcerned in all that hath been said, but find something either to be amended or completed in you; yet the promises of eternal life (just now mentioned) seem, above all other things, to offer themselves as most proper for your thoughts at this season. The hope of this will be your greatest comfort in this affliction. This will support you, and make you to rejoice in the midst of tribulation. What though you have the common portion of others in this present time, since you have a great deal better prepared for you hereafter? nay, what though you be now excluded from external communion with the people of God? the time is coming when you shall enter into a most happy fellowship, from which there will be no separation. Do not therefore faint under this affliction, nor be weary when you are corrected. Humbly submit yourself to your heavenly Father. Resign yourself into the hands of his wise love, that he may dispose of you as he pleases. Believe firmly that he is good even when he smites: and think that he who will give you eternal life would not deny you a less thing if he saw it best. Remember the patience of Job, or rather set before your eyes the example of our blessed Saviour, who was *made*

perfect by sufferings[a]. Think that he pities you, and that withal he looks upon you to see how you will now behave yourself. Let him behold a soul meek, contented, courageous, rejoicing always; for there is not a more lovely spectacle that he can be presented withal. And let him see your belief of his gospel so strong and lively that you do not tremble to pass through that gate which he hath entered before you. Follow him cheerfully to the grave itself. Remember that he hath overcome death, that king of terrors; that he hath despoiled it of all its power, and made it innocent to his followers. Let it not affright you therefore, but look upon it as a necessary passage to a better life. Welcome it as a friend, and do not take it any longer for an enemy. Receive it with such a countenance, as if you believed it to be a messenger sent to fetch you home to your Father's house. In these good thoughts I leave you; and heartily commit you to the love and care of our dearest Lord: beseeching you, now that our public instructions cannot reach you, this private message may be embraced with as much affection as it is sent to you; and beseeching him also that you may be as strongly moved to a speedy consideration of these things, as I was to the writing of them for the use of those souls that are committed to my charge. Amen.

August 19, 1665.

[a] [Heb. ii. 10.]

A

CONSOLATORY DISCOURSE,

PERSUADING

TO A CHEERFUL TRUST IN GOD IN THESE TIMES OF TROUBLE AND DANGER.

A CONSOLATORY DISCOURSE,

&c.

THE face of things is now so calamitous, and there is so much sadness discovers itself in the looks of all those who are serious, and affected with our present miseries, that it seems as great a deed of charity to send some comfort to them, as to call the careless world to repentance. There hath not a week of late passed, but we are told in the bills of mortality that some are dead of grief. The weight of many men's sorrows is so great that it sinks them into their graves: and they that are not yet so heavily oppressed, yet groan under their burdens; and we hear every day of some or other that are ready to faint by reason of the anguish of their spirits. We have some hopes, indeed, that the number is not very great who are so sorely distressed; but yet there is a general damp, I observe, upon the better sort of souls, and there are many things concur to cast a cloud over their faces. Some are very heavy for the loss of their friends, and others for the fear of that loss. It afflicts some to see such a decay of trade; and others begin to have apprehensions of poverty, and think it is possible they may fall into want. We see men startled very much to find the burials swelled to such an height the week that is passed; and again it affrights them to think of the sum that this week current may mount them unto. Most men are possessed with a fear of death, which now surrounds them on all sides; and others that have been free from those terrors, yet are in some dread of that kind of death that domineers among us: insomuch that they are very numerous, methinks, whose very aspects beg for some consolation. We can cast our eyes nowhere but we behold some or other imploring our help, and craving something that may brighten their countenances, by reviving and cheering their drooping spirits.

That is the errand of this little paper; which it came into my mind upon these considerations to send after a former sheet; that all those who truly repent them of their sins, and

apply their thoughts and endeavours to amend their lives, may not make their lives a burden to them by fears, or cares, or grief, or any other of those troublesome passions which we are apt to be haunted withal.

Now though there be many particular supports which are easy to be produced for men's relief under every one of those evils which are the cause of their complaints, yet this discourse being confined to so small a compass as a sheet, it will be best to direct you to one remedy for all diseases: especially considering that one medicine will be better remembered than a great many; that the application and use of it also will be more easy; and that the mind being fixed in one point, it will be the less subject to distraction by a multitude of thoughts. And when I cast mine eye upon the holy books, to find that which may be most proper for every man's case, I can see nothing so much spoken of, nothing so much magnified and applauded, for a present cure of all troubles, as TRUSTING IN GOD. *Our fathers trusted in thee* (saith the prophet, in that mournful Psalm xxii. 4, 5): *they trusted, and thou didst deliver them. They cried unto thee, and were delivered: they trusted in thee, and were not confounded.* Here you have the practice and experience of ancient times, which are a direction to us in like cases. You have here so approved a remedy, and which this divine writer thought so safe, that he resolved to take no other course in a time of such contagion as this is. For having observed that he who flies to the Most High as his sanctuary *abides under the shadow of the Almighty*, he determines to seek for no other comfort or security, but thus concludes with himself; *I will say of the Lord, He is my refuge and my fortress: my God; in him I will trust*[a].

Let us see then of what this famous and so much tried remedy may consist. Let us search of what an antidote so powerful is compounded. If it be such an universal medicine, it concerns us very much to be well acquainted with it, that we may not mistake in the making of it, either by leaving out or putting in of any thing which may spoil its efficacy. And, to say the truth, it is a very plain and simple thing, which will

[a] Psalm xci. 1, 2, 3.

not torture your wits to comprehend. This is the beginning of your comfort, that there is nothing in it but what is vulgarly known, if it were but as well followed and put in use. It is only to behave ourselves towards God as we do to one of our good neighbours, of whose skill and fidelity we have assurance, and the business is done.

I. First, then, if an honest man give us his word for the performance of any thing we desire of him, on this we rely as our security, demanding no other; from whence we are said to trust that person. Which directs us, if we will place our confidence in God, to be thoroughly persuaded of the truth of all that he hath promised, resting assured that it shall certainly be fulfilled. Is there nothing that God hath given us his word for? Doth he not stand at all engaged to us? Can we find nothing upon record that he hath said for our comfort and support in this world of sorrows? Turn over the leaves of that Book which is deservedly called the Book of God, and you will see that he hath tied himself unto us for the performance of several things that highly import us, not only by his word but by his oath. He hath testified his singular care of the happiness of the world. He hath shown the great desire he hath that his creatures should live in good comfort, and not be miserable, in that he hath not only said but sworn that *he will do them good.* He hath assured us, in a more solemn manner than could be desired, that he will provide for us; that he will give us a competency of these worldly goods; that *he will never leave us nor forsake us;* that he will be our support and comforter in all afflictions; that *he will strengthen us on a bed of languishing, and make all our beds in our sickness;* that *he will lay no more upon us than we shall be able to bear;* and that *all things shall work together for good to those that love him.* Of which promises you must no more doubt than if it were in your own power to bestow these blessings on yourselves. And is all this nothing, think you, to cheer a man's heart? Is there no virtue in these words (if steadfastly believed) to raise up your sinking spirits? Will it give you no joy to think that you are so sure to be under the care of God? You would have had him promise you perhaps that you shall never be sick; or that you shall not be sick of

any contagious disease; or that you shall have long life; or come to great riches and honours, without which you cannot be content. Poor fools! he hath promised you far nobler enjoyments, and would not have you set your hearts on things of so low concernment. Besides those that I have mentioned, there are three most remarkable things which he hath passed his word and faith for, which, if you believe, I shall soon give you satisfaction in the lesser matters of which you are so desirous. First, he hath promised forgiveness of sins if you heartily amend: an inestimable favour; and which imports us more than to be well, to be rich, or to enjoy all the pleasures on earth. For they are in truth no pleasures, whensoever a man thinks of damnation at the last. Secondly, he hath promised the gift of the Holy Ghost to help and sustain us, to comfort and cheer us, to guide and conduct us in our way to the third thing that he hath assured us of; and that is eternal life, to reward our piety, our fidelity, our patience and adherence to him. This St. John hath set a mark upon as the most illustrious of all other, saying, *This is the promise that he hath promised us, even eternal life*[b]. As if he would have us fix our eyes on this above all other things; and have us to think that if God hath not said so much concerning temporal enjoyments as we desire, the reason is, because his word is a thing which it is fit his Majesty should pass in matters of more moment, and of which there might be greater doubt. And truly these things which I have named are such that if we can believe them upon his word, we may well trust him for all the rest without his word. For who can think that he who will give us heaven will deny us any thing that is fit for us upon the earth? Or who can be such an idiot as to imagine that he who is so liberal as to bestow eternal life, will be sparing of a long life to us here, if he judge it most convenient? And that will bring me to the second thing, which is,

II. To direct you to place a confidence in God that he will give you whatsoever is best for you, though it be not promised. It is a great imperfection, and robs men of much comfort, not to be able to rely on God unless they have his word

[b] 1 John ii. 25.

for every thing. Is not the nature of God, think you, as great a security to us as that can be? Truly they that understand things judge it to be rather greater; because it is that which gives credit to his word. Why do you believe, I beseech you, what God saith? Is it not because you know his truth and goodness to be so unspotted that he cannot possibly deceive you? Let us then be of good cheer. From hence we may derive our comfort as well as from any thing else. Nay, this is the very original and fountain of all our consolation and support, that God is of such a nature that he delights in the welfare and contentment of his creatures. From this we may fetch as much joy as we please. We need not doubt to conclude from hence that we shall have all that is good for us, though there were not one word said of it. And he is neither good nor wise that will desire more, and not rest himself contented in this persuasion. Let us have recourse, if you please, to our dealings one with another; for by them I told you we should best understand what it is to trust in God. Do we never repose a confidence in an excellent person, unless he gives us his word or his bond? Are there not some men of whom we have such an high opinion, that we readily deposit our money, our jewels, our deeds, or any thing else in their hands, and never so much as ask them to give us their promise that they will safely keep them for us? Why do we think it strange then to depend on God in this manner? Why do we not think that we have assurance enough from the absolute perfection of God's nature that it shall go well with us? What is the matter that we cannot be satisfied without he pass his word; and that we are not confident in himself that we shall want no good thing? In my poor judgment this is rather to trust in God than the other. I mean, he is more properly said to trust in God who persuades himself that he is so good as to give him all things needful, though not particularly promised, than he that relies only on his word. For this latter is rather to be called *faith* than *trust*. Between which two there seems to be this difference, that faith hath respect only to the word of God, to what he saith and expresses, but trust goes further and hath respect also to God himself. It looks not only at what he is engaged to do, but at what he is inclined to do for us. Conclude there-

fore with the Psalmist, and pronounce it in a joyful and triumphant manner[c]: *The Lord God is a sun and a shield: the Lord will give grace and glory; and no good thing will he withhold from them that walk uprightly. O Lord God of hosts, blessed is the man that trusteth in thee.* He doth not envy any of his blessings to us. He is as free of his favours as the sun is of his beams. He is no more backward and unwilling to do us any good, than that great lamp of heaven (which is as it were his visible image) is to impart its light and heat to the world. And therefore he is in a blessed condition that trusts in God. He hath united himself by that means to the very fountain and source of all good things; and so cannot fail to enjoy in every condition that which is most profitable for him. Be it health, be it riches, be it long life, which we think is best for us; if God think so too, we may resolve his bounty will not let us want it, but certainly bestow it upon us. I shall stay till anon to ask you if you can find no comfort in this persuasion; and now proceed to tell you, in the third place, that in order to your full content,

III. You must in this confidence commit yourselves to his good providence, that he may dispose of you as he pleases. If you verily believe that God will have a care of you, then you cannot choose but yield up yourself and all you have to his wise goodness, desiring that every thing may be as he, not as you will. For doth not he that trusts in another, whether in his word or his virtue, leave any thing with him and deposit it in his hands? Doth he not rest assured that it will be safe; that he will dispose of it as shall be most fitting; or that he will improve it for his benefit? Do we not see that he ceases to trouble himself any further, when he hath once secured his goods in this man's keeping? that he casts away all care; that he is not possessed with fears; but saith as we must do of God, *I know whom I have trusted*[d]*?* You do vainly then pretend to trust in the Father of mercies, and as vainly hope for any contentment, if you do not thus resign up yourselves and all your concernments unto him, being fully satisfied that he will do what is most conducing to your good. This is the confidence that he expects we will repose in him if we take him for our

[c] Psalm lxxxiv. 11, 12. [d] [2 Tim. i. 12.]

friend. And whatsoever men of fancy may persuade themselves, this is a nobler degree of trust in God, than to have the particular confidence (which they so eagerly aspire unto) that he will do this or that. This in truth puts the most honour upon him, when we relinquish our own particular desires, and refer all to his will. This is the most certain mark of our believing him to be what he is, when we dare thus leave ourselves entirely to him, that he may do as he pleases with us. The times are now very sickly; we are all in great danger, and know not to what remedies we should fly. Death hath fetched away so many round about us, that we may fear he will come for us next. If we will now act the part of good Christians, or if we will have any constant comfort, we must all say as David doth, *What time I am afraid, I will trust in thee*[e]. Let us now refer all to God, who knows best what use he hath for his creatures, and where it is most fit to bestow them, either in this world or in the other. Let us be confident he will dispose us there where it is most necessary and best for us to be. And in this confidence we shall find abundant satisfaction, both in this and all other things that trouble us. It will *keep us in perfect peace*, thus to *stay our minds on him*[f], Nay, I think fit to add, that if there be any way to have that which we are naturally inclined to wish, (be it health, or plenty, or any thing else,) this is it. For doth not a person that is perfectly and without any conditions entrusted by us, think himself more engaged and concerned to dispose of what we leave with him, not only to our advantage, but as near as may be to our heart's desire? Do not think then that God is so unkind that he loves to cross us in that which we are inclined to ask, after we have submitted it wholly to him. Believe that he will deal very tenderly with those who have such an high esteem of him, that they ask nothing but that he will do as seems good in his eyes. He hath a greater care of these men's good than any others. He is more engaged to them, (if we may speak in our common phrase,) and they shall see he will deal very well with them. He is much pleased that they leave all to his wisdom, and therefore will not fail to let them fare the better for not interposing their own particular desires. But if we will be taking upon us to prescribe to him

[e] [Ps. lvi. 3.] [f] [Is. xxvi. 3.]

what course he shall take, if we behave ourselves as if we should be undone unless things go in that one way which we determine, and therefore are always solicitously entreating him for this and that which we fancy nearly concerns our worldly estate, then we disoblige him very much. It is a sign we would take things out of his management if we could, and be glad to have the ordering of affairs in our own power. It shows that we are loath to trust him, and that we suspect his wisdom and goodness, or at least that we have no such feeling of them, but that we had rather rely upon our own skill and love to ourselves. Now how can this choose but render our condition as unsecure as it will make it uncomfortable? We can never have any settled peace unless we quietly commit ourselves to God; nor can we hope for any safety at all, which is furthest off from those who so little esteem his will, that they prefer their own before it. Away therefore with all your cares, (if you would be happy,) and *cast them upon him, for he careth for you*[d]. Throw them entirely upon him, for it is his business to govern the world, and not yours. Let him see you rest yourselves with as composed a spirit on his Providence, as if it were in your own hands to do what you list. This is the only way to please him, and you will never sure be pleased yourselves unless you think that he is so too.

IV. And now having thus cast your care upon him, it must be your care to walk uprightly before him; for from such persons (you heard) he will withhold no good thing. It is no part of your work indeed to busy your thoughts about future events; but there is something else that lies upon you, which is, to do what God at present bids you, that so you may be always qualified for his favours. This is not only a necessary concomitant of our trusting in God, but a part of it. We must *commit our souls* (or lives) *to him in well doing, as into the hands of a faithful Creator*[e]. We must *trust in the Lord and do good; so shall we dwell in the land, and verily we shall be fed*[f]. Great heed must be taken that you leave not out this ingredient (as I may call it) of doing good, when you are forming your trust in God; for the remedy will be quite spoiled if this be wanting. For have you not seen that to trust

[d] 1 Pet. v. 7. [e] iv. 19. [f] Psalm xxxvii. 3.

in God is to take his word, to believe that he saith true whatsoever it be that he speaks? Now how solemnly hath he told you that *his face is against them that do evil, to cut off the remembrance of them from the earth!* that *the way of the ungodly shall be turned upside down!* that *the wicked shall fall into mischief*[g]! And therefore must you not be persuaded that there is no way to be happy in this world or in the other, but by following of his counsels and obeying his commands? If you trust God, you must necessarily govern yourselves by this belief. If you give any credit to him, you must observe those rules whereby he would have you to live. And you must resolve that he hath no confidence in God, who hopes for his blessing in those ways which he hath said shall not prosper. No, he confides in his own bold fancy and presumptuous thoughts. He contradicts God, and gives him the lie. He saith in effect, that he will not trust his word, which hath expressly told us, that *he who walks uprightly shall be saved; but he that is perverse in his ways shall fall at once*[h]. You must live soberly, righteously, and godly in the world, if you will have any comfort. You must walk with God, if you will be under his shadow. When you run away from him, you fly from your Shield, and lose your confidence of his protection. In evil ways you are insecure, and there the angel of death is most like to meet you. *But let all those that put their trust in God rejoice, let them ever shout for joy. For thou, Lord, wilt bless the righteous, with favour wilt thou compass him as with a shield*[i]. Where the *righteous* (you may observe) and they that *put their trust in God* are the very same men, and the only persons that can rejoice and expect that he will defend them from all that will prove hurtful to them.

Thus I have briefly shown you of what this ancient and divine remedy doth consist. All that remains is to reflect and consider if there be not both great cause thus to trust in God, and also such great comfort in so doing, that a man may shout for joy, as you heard the Psalmist just now express it.

As for the cause; there are so many grounds of our confi-

[g] [Ps. xxxi. 16; cxlvi. 9; Prov. xxiv. 16.]

[h] Prov. xxviii. 18.

[i] Psalm v. 11, 12.

dence as there are perfections in God. His goodness is so great, that he delights in our happiness. His wisdom is so great, that he cannot mistake nor make any choice of that for us which is pernicious. His power is so great, that, as nothing can come to pass without his leave, so nothing can be hindered which his wisdom and goodness will have done. He is faithful and just also, and cannot but make good his word. And besides, he is so immutable, that he always governs the world by the same eternal rules, and gives us thereby the same hopes in him that good men have ever had.

Why do we not rejoice in God then as well as they? What comfort would you have that is not here to be found? Are good hopes in the immortal, only wise God, nothing worth? Or can they give but a feeble support to those that are owners of them? If they can do any thing, you see plainly there is great cause for them, and greater than for many other things. They are secured so many ways, that it is manifest God would not have us want the comfort of them. The power of God (for example sake) may make you fear him, and there is great reason for it; but it will not produce love to him. On the other side, the goodness of God will make you love him, but it doth not so easily produce fear. These affections grow (as it were) on single roots; and that which bears the one doth not bear the other. But as for trust in God, that grows upon them both. The power of God will make us confide in him as well as his goodness. And besides the wisdom, the justice, the faithfulness, and the eternity of God, give strength and force unto our confidence. All these are apt to beget in us assurance of good from him; so that if that be of any moment to our support and consolation, we cannot well be without them.

And verily it is of exceeding great consequence. The comfort that it gives is infinite, and cannot be limited. It extends itself to all things, to every case and condition of life. There is no evil which threatens us in this world, but it can help and arm us against the assaults of it. It cuts off all the matter of our trouble. We need not fear any thing. We need not be careful for any thing. We need not torment ourselves with restless desires. And there is no cause that we should be wounded

with any grief and sorrow. We have nothing left us to do but only to rejoice always, because we are in his hands who *exerciseth loving-kindness, judgment and righteousness in the earth;* and protests that *in these things he delights*[i]. In this we may glory and make our boast. This may justly fill us with joy and gladness, which are the only passions that this trust leaves in possession of the heart. We may *say continually, Let the Lord be magnified, which hath pleasure in the prosperity of his servants*[j]. There is nothing can fall out in which we may not rest exceedingly satisfied. We may welcome any thing with a pleasant countenance, because it is the appointment of our loving Father, to whose care we have left the ordering of all that belongs to us. It is impossible any thing should come to us, unless the goodness of God be first consulted. No plague (for instance) can smite us, but almighty power must first give way. There cannot the least thing which we call evil so much as touch us, but infinite wisdom must consent unto it. And who would be troubled if these shall bid poverty, or sickness, or the loss of friends, or death itself go to him? Where is his wit that would bid them stay away, when God commands them to come? Will any man that is advised take it ill, that that is done which the infinite Wisdom and Goodness appoints? Will he desire any thing should be otherways than as that shall direct? What contentment could a man take in a place, if it were possible to stay in it, against the will and pleasure of heaven? Or to what purpose is it to wish to remain any longer here, when the Sovereign of the world would remove us to another and a better country? No, we should say cheerfully, the will of the Lord be done. It is the Lord, let him do as seems good in his sight. Now Lord, will thy servant depart in peace: we will come, now that thou callest us. Thou art good and thou dost good; and therefore we will readily follow thee, though thou leadest us to the grave.

I know indeed that there are many who would be glad if I could say something else unto them: and who would rejoice more than I doubt they will do in this discourse, if I could give them ground to believe that they shall certainly be pre-

[i] Jer. ix. 24. [j] [Ps. xxxv. 27.]

served, by confidence in God, from the infection that is abroad. This is the thing which they look for. They are much in love with life, and so they would think themselves happy if they could be assured they shall not lose it. They would fain have us to put this confidence into their minds, by putting it into the nature of trust in God. It is worth little, they imagine, if this persuasion be not intermixed with it. And if the 91st Psalm be not thus expounded, they can take but small comfort in the reading of it.

But as I am loath to deceive anybody, so I would not willingly have men deceive themselves by misunderstanding that and other places of holy Writ. I would not have them be more bold than truly confident; the effect of which will be this, that they must needs be extremely troubled and confounded when they find themselves confuted by death. Some indeed of these bold believers may escape, and so they would without this confidence; but others of them may die, and then consider what an amazement it will be to meet with a disappointment. For, I beseech you, have not all ages taught us that good men die as well as others by pestilential breaths? Not so many indeed as of the rest, because there are not so many of them to die. They are but thinly scattered in the world; and therefore at no time can there as many fall of them as of the bad. But yet I say, do not some of them feel this stroke of God? Will we condemn all those for wicked, or such as had no trust in God, who have perished in this great mortality? It is no good sign that you shall be safe, if you be so uncharitable. For you ought not so much as to conclude that they were all defective in this duty, of confiding in the Almighty. And yet there is no avoiding it, but you must say one of these two things; either that there is no ground for this absolute confidence of being preserved, or that all those whose lives were not preserved did not do their duty in relying upon this promise of God (as some take it to be) for their safety. If you will not condemn them, then you must condemn these arrogant pretences and high confidences, which limit God to men's own desires.

But what shall we say then to the words of the Psalmist, you will ask? Are not they a promise from God, that all such

as will trust themselves with him shall be secured? Do they not tell us, that a man so qualified shall see ten thousand fall about him, and he escape [k]?

I answer; No, they are not a promise made to us by God: but rather a kind of promise which the Psalmist makes to himself of safety and protection in time to come, grounded upon the experience of what God had done for him already. The experiment which he had newly made of the successfulness of this course (to fly to God by an humble faith and resignation to him) raised him to a hope in his goodness for the future; that by the same means he should still be preserved. This will be better understood, if the occasion of the Psalm be marked. Many of the Hebrews indeed think it was penned by Moses, as the foregoing Psalm was upon occasion of the plague in the wilderness; but it is more probable that it was writ by David in the time of that great plague, when the angel of the Lord slew 70,000 in so small a space of time (according to Josephus) as between the morning and the next noon. Upon this the good king (as you read in the story, 1 Chron. xxi. 16, 17.) and the elders of Israel betook themselves to God by prayer, humiliation and repentance. Which had such success, that just as the angel was coming to smite the citizens of Jerusalem, the stroke was diverted, and the plague stayed. Though a thousand had fallen on one side, and ten thousand on the other, yet that place was taken into the protection of the Almighty: and no execution being done there, it remained an eminent instance of the powerfulness of this remedy, and obedient faith in God. Whereupon the Psalmist, full of joy in so happy a success, resolves that he will for ever take this course; and proclaims it to all succeeding times as the best remedy against infection, to take sanctuary in God: nothing doubting of his protection, if there be the same reason for it, that then there was. He observing, I say, that the man who *dwells in the secret place of the Most High* [l], (i. e. who takes sanctuary in God by repentance, reformation, ardent prayer, and committing himself to his Providence) *abides under his shadow*, that is, is remarkably defended by him; determines thus with himself in the second verse; *I will say of the Lord*, (i. e. to himself he resolves to

[k] Ps. xci. 7. [l] Ver. 1.

speak thus on all occasions,) *He is my refuge and my fortress; my God, in him I will trust. Surely he shall deliver thee* (speaking still to himself) *from the snare of the fowler, and from the noisome pestilence*, i. e. from all unseen dangers that are most unavoidable. Never doubt of his protection for the time to come, who hath so miraculously preserved thee of late. *He will cover thee with his feathers, and under his wings thou shalt trust. Thou shalt not be afraid for the terror by night, &c. A thousand shall fall at thy side, &c. But no evil shall befall thee, neither shall any plague come nigh thy dwelling. For he shall give his angels charge over thee, to keep thee in all thy ways.* And so forward, till you come to the fourteenth verse, he expresses his hope in God: where, as if he heard the charge that God gave his angels concerning him, to see that no hurt came to him, he concludes in a pious rapture with the words of God to them; *Because he hath set his love upon me, therefore will I deliver him: I will set him on high, because he hath known my name. He shall call upon me, and I will answer him: I will be with him in trouble, I will deliver him, and honour him. With long life will I satisfy him, and show him my salvation*[m]. The rest of the Psalm, I say, till you come to the three last verses, are not spoken directly to others, but only to himself. They are not the words of God to David, but David's own words to himself, to encourage his heart to confide in God. Which when he hath ended, then at the fourteenth verse, I observe, the person is changed; and in that heat of divine inspiration wherein he was, he conceives God himself speaking to the angels, and telling them, that he resolves they shall take a particular care of David, whom he would preserve a long time (being of so great use to his people, and a type also of the Messiah) from all the mischief that evil men or evil spirits might design and contrive against him. This, I make no question, is the scope of the holy writer. But as for ourselves, we have no inspiration; nor are these words spoken unto us all, to give us such a particular assurance that we shall be secured from contagious diseases, as he was, by a singular favour of the Almighty.

Besides, if we will needs conceive a promise here to be made

[m] Ps. xci. 14, 15, 16.

to all good men in those days, we have no authority to extend it to all such now. For the promises of the gospel are quite of another nature than those of the law of Moses; which you may suppose, if you please, were here renewed to them. That gave them assurance of outward blessings if they observed it; of all which long life was accounted the chief. But the gospel gives us assurance of spiritual blessings, and, above all, of eternal life in the other world. Read the twenty-eighth of Deuteronomy; and there you shall find that God promises to bless them in their bodies, in their goods both within doors and without, if they kept his precepts: but, on the contrary, threatens that if they did not he would bring all miseries on them; and particularly make *the pestilence cleave to them till he had consumed them; and smite them with a consumption, and with a fever, and with inflammations, and extreme burning*[n]. Now in such a calamitous time the Psalmist may be thought to promise (that is the most you can make of it) that good men shall be delivered from those curses, and have the blessings made over to them by the covenant of Moses. And therefore you may observe that he speaks here of deliverance from many other things besides the pestilence, which I never heard, notwithstanding, anybody now promise themselves. So that it makes me wonder how some come to be so confident of preservation from the plague upon the score of the Psalmist's words, and not from all the rest of the calamities he here mentions. E. g. ver. 5. he saith, *Thou shalt not be afraid for the terror by night* (which may well be expounded of thieves and murderers), *nor for the arrow that flieth by day* (which we may understand of open wars and battles); *nor for the pestilence which walketh in darkness*, i. e. of those contagious diseases which come from an unknown cause; *nor for the destruction which wasteth at noon day*[o], i. e. calentures and fevers, which rage most when the weather is hottest. And most manifestly he speaks, ver. 13, of preservation from poison and wild beasts: nay, before that he saith in general words, *No evil shall befall thee*[p], &c. Now doth any good man promise himself that he shall never fall into the hand of robbers; that he shall not suffer in time of war; or shall not die of a fever, or have any corporal hurt at all come to him? What is

[n] Psalm xci. 21, 22. [o] Ver. 6. [p] Ver. 10.

the cause then that many have singled out this of the pestilence, which they promise themselves freedom from by a particular faith in God, and take no notice at all of the rest? By the same reason that they can be confident in this, they may be confident of never being ill at all. They ought to consider all these things as more proper to the times of the Law, when God was in a more earthly covenant with them, and not promise themselves any of them so certainly, now that we are in a covenant founded upon better promises, which teaches us to commit ourselves and all our concerns to him, and to refer ourselves to his wisdom, that he may choose what he sees best for us. This is the highest pitch of Christian confidence; which frames not to itself particular assurances of being delivered from this and that evil, but rests contented with the present, and waits quietly for the future, as that which is ordered by an unerring understanding.

All that we can attain to beyond this is only some hopes that on some great occasion, and for some special reason, God may grant us the like preservation with some in former days from the pestilence and such like evils: some hopes, I say, not arising from any particular promise, yet from the nature of God, and the experience of ancient times in the like cases. I will instance in two. First, in case of a remarkable repentance and reformation of life, there is some ground to hope for a special protection in infectious times. When the angel, as you heard, forbare to do execution upon Jerusalem, it was upon a deep humiliation of David and the elders or nobles, who, clad in sackcloth, and falling on their faces, became earnest supplicants to God to spare that place. This is some encouragement to all men now *who love life, and would see many days*[o], to give some singular testimony of their repentance and sincere resolution to use their life for better purposes than they have done: it is probable it might turn to the preservation of their families, as formerly of that city. Nay, if we saw some eminent proof of the unfeigned reformation of the great ones of the land, God, we might hope, would remove his present judgment from us. If all our elders, i. e. nobles, would join with our sovereign to do some notable thing in the eyes of God and

[o] [Ps. xxxiv. 12.]

all the world, for the amending themselves and the whole kingdom, there is reason to expect some notable effect.

And again, if a man be a remarkable person, of great use and benefit to the world, and that is like to do God notable service, there is some ground to hope for his preservation[p]. David was spared upon this account. He was an excellent governor, and a person that had a great zeal for the honour of God, and was to be a type also of Christ: and for this very reason, that he might more exactly shadow him, we may think the holy angels were commanded to minister for him, and see that no evil angels hurt him. And God resolved to bestow a longer life on him, that he might the better typify the everlasting kingdom of our Lord and Saviour. And thus it was with the holy apostles and their successors; in whom some passages of this psalm were literally fulfilled, as others were in our Lord Christ. For it is said, *Thou shalt tread upon the lion and adder: the young lion and the dragon shalt thou trample under feet*[q]. And just thus our Lord speaks to them when he bade them go and preach and convert the world; *They shall take up serpents; and if they drink any deadly thing it shall not hurt them*[r]. He having occasion to use their service, they were defended and secured by him from innumerable mischiefs, till he saw that by their deaths they would glorify him more than by their lives. The way then to have more than ordinary hopes of security, is to become more than ordinary men. And the best way even for those men to preserve themselves, is by such a strong trust in God as I have described.

For I must add now, in the conclusion, that there is a natural efficacy in it to secure us; and that if we maintain it in its full force and vigour, it is such a medicine as seldom fails those that rely it upon it for their protection. It is apparent from what physicians write concerning preservatives against this pestilential disease, that they can prescribe nothing like to trust in God, which contains in it the virtue of them all. First they tell us, that whatsoever expels all fear, and makes us bold and confident, is of great efficacy against the infection: and

[p] ['preparation' in the earlier editions.]

[q] Psalm xci. 13.

[r] Mark xvi. 18.

secondly, whatsoever makes us quiet and still, that which calms all passions, and stops the rage and boiling of the blood, hath a singular force in it: and thirdly, that it is necessary to take cordials, and to keep up the spirits in a joyful pitch; for that which makes the heart merry and cheerful is of notable use against the contagion. Now every one of these make it manifest, that trusting in God is the best antidote in the world, even upon the account of nature; because these three are the proper and constant effects of it. There is nothing so powerful to thrust out all fear, and to banish terror and amazement of spirit, as to commend ourselves to God, and to believe that we are in the almighty hands of our Creator; so that nothing can touch us, but it must, as we may say, pass through him before it come at us. And then, for quieting and composing the spirit, there is nothing so powerful as this. Whilst we repose ourselves in the bosom of Almighty Providence, we must needs be at rest, and have a great stillness and tranquillity in our breast. This allays all feverish heats which, either by our desires, or cares, or grief, or any other passion, are apt to rage. And lastly, if this will not beget joy and gladness, what is there that can do it? It is able to put us in the very highest pitch of joy, into a triumph and exultation of spirit, to think that we are God's care, and live under his shadow, and that he stands entrusted with us, who is always faithful to those whom he takes into his charge. He that leaves himself wholly with him is eased of all other employments, and hath this only left to do; to rejoice in his holy name, to make his boast of God, and to glory in the happiness to which he is arrived. And from all this we may well conclude that this antidote will do great wonders by the blessing of God, who, we see, succeeds other means that are but of an inferior nature.

And therefore let us put ourselves into the hands of God, and be assured, that if we be not saved from the destroying angel, there was great reason that we should die, which it was not fit for any indulgence of heaven to overrule. Let us think this comfort enough, that we have committed ourselves to him who will do nothing but what we would do if we saw so much as he. And, indeed, I do not see what greater comfort an assurance of deliverance would give us than we may have in an humble submission of all to God's will and pleasure. We

should have no privilege above others, but only to know something beforehand which they do not; for as to the thing itself, they may have it (though they do not foresee it) as well as we. Now what great comfort is there merely in knowing that we shall live some years longer in this world? Are such men assured also that no other evil shall befall them? Shall they never lose their health nor their friends? Why are they not confident of this too, and that they shall die of nothing but old age, because it is said there, *No evil shall befall thee;* and, *With long life will I satisfy him*[s]*?* Or if they had assurance of all this, where is the advantage they have of other men who pretend to no such confidence? Is it such an happiness merely to live? Is not this a greater, to know that we shall have what God sees good? to be assured we shall stay here as long as he judges it will make for our happiness? And if this be the comfort, then we are possessed of it without their particular assurances. We know that a sparrow falls not to the ground without our Father's providence. We are certain that if he see it best we shall remain here longer, before we be removed to another place. And, indeed, that is the thing which men of higher confidences than others should be first assured of; that such things shall make for their greatest good, or else they can with no comfort expect them. About which since I observe they are so little thoughtful, their confidence, methinks, is of no value, but only speaks a natural desire of life to be very prevalent in them: nay, their ardent desires of arriving at this particular assurance of a longer life betrays too little faith of better things. If they were persuaded those things are true which they read of in another world, what need they be so solicitous, or esteem it such a favour to have assurance of living in this? It argues too much infidelity, that men are so infinitely fearful to leave their present enjoyments; which makes them bend their thoughts rather to persuade themselves they shall continue here, than to be prepared for a departure to their heavenly country. And it is a mark also of a very low spirit, to take more contentment in being assured of a longer life, than in looking upon their lives as in the hands of a good God: for this is to rejoice in what God gives more than in

[s] Psalm xci. 10, 16.

himself, and to be pleased in one worldly blessing more than in the vast treasures of his providence.

In those then let us think ourselves to be rich and happy enough. Let us live as if we had great possessions in his love and good will to us. Let us take ourselves to be so amply endowed there, that we desire nothing more; and, for an argument that you really think you have enough, let those that are able impart of their worldly goods to them that are in need. This will both be an argument that you trust in the living God, and not in uncertain riches, and also a great means to secure you in this infectious season: for God hath great use of such men in the world; and they are most likely to be preserved for the good of the poor, who want such benefactors. And I heartily wish that all they who are now fled had left a large portion of their charity behind them; for I verily believe it would have been a more effectual means to preserve them than the change of place, or any other that they can use. But they are out of the reach of this paper; and it will now hold no more but only these words of David; *Trust in him at all times, ye people; pour out your heart before him: God is a refuge for us*[t].

[t] Psalm lxii. 8.

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